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# Crossed Sabers

Volume I, Issue I

"Telling the MND-Baghdad Story"

Monday, Dec. 11, 2006



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Col. Mike Shields, commander, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Ulibarri, 172nd SBCT senior noncommissioned officer, from Thornton, Colo., case their unit's colors during a ceremony Nov. 24 outside the Division Morale Welfare and Recreation complex on Camp Liberty. The Arctic Wolves served 16 consecutive months in Iraq and are officially head back to Alaska.**

## Home After 456 Days

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The Arctic Wolves are returning to Alaska as a pack after 16 consecutive months of operations here.

The Soldiers of the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team cased their colors in a ceremony Nov. 24 outside the Division Morale Welfare and Recreation complex. The ceremony marked the official end of combat operations for the unit deployed primarily from Fort Wainwright and partially from Fort Richardson, Alaska.

"The Arctic Wolves have accomplished a great deal in the last 16 months; successful partnership and COIN (counter insurgency) success in Northern Iraq, protecting the population and reducing the EJK (extra-judicial killing) violence in our focus areas of Baghdad," said Col. Mike Shields, the brigade commander.

In accomplishing the mission, the 172nd suffered the loss of great Soldiers, said Shields, a native of Kennebunk, Maine.

"It is time for one of the greatest brigades in our Army's history to case the colors and return home. We will never forget the sacrifices of our Soldiers, our families and our children," Shields said during the



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

## Shadow of Hope

**A paratrooper from Company C, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, takes a knee during a short halt during a dismounted area recon, Nov. 24 of a town in south Baghdad.**

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# Soldiers Find Turkey, Family on Thanksgiving Day

By Spc. L.B. Edgar  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - This wasn't Grandma's house, but the table was full of people. They came from over the river and through woods, did route clearing, stood guard and made it in for a traditional meal.

Yet, something is missing at this year's Thanksgiving Day feast. The meal is complete, but unfortunately the families of many Soldiers are absent from the annual festivities.

Far from home, Soldiers of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad spent Thanksgiving with each other, rather than their families.

For some Soldiers this is not a new experience. Sgt. John Eldridge, 372nd Military Police Battalion, 89th MP Brigade, is deployed for a second time and will miss sharing a turkey with his family again, he said.

This year for Turkey Day, the light-wheel mechanic took a break from inventorying the motor pool, to partake in a Thanksgiving Day feast with fellow Soldiers.

Though Eldridge won't be dining on his grandmother's cornbread stuffing and watching Dallas and Detroit do



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Lt. Col. Thomas Bischof (left), the Multi-National Division-Baghdad Provost Marshal, serves up food to Soldiers as they celebrate Thanksgiving at Camp Liberty, Iraq Nov. 23.**

battle, he said he was still able to chow down on his favorite Thanksgiving Day dish - macaroni and cheese, and catch some gridiron action later in the evening. This year's Thanksgiving is bitter-sweet for the native of

Washington, D.C., because after nearly one year deployed, he said he's headed home for Christmas.

For other Soldiers the deployment has just started.

Pfc. Davina Medina, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, would rather be home with her son than fighting in the Global War on Terrorism this Thanksgiving.

However, the intelligence analyst said she would settle for the next best thing, a telephone call home to talk to her son, who sleeps while his mother ate turkey and stuffing half-a-world away. On a normal Thanksgiving, the native of Azusa, Calif., could be found cooking, eating and sleeping all day. But this year, she is serving in her chosen profession as a Soldier.

Though the 18-month Army veteran will miss her favorite dish, Ecuadorian stuffing, compliments of her grandfather, she said there is a positive side to deploying for Thanksgiving.

"You don't have to cook or clean up," she said.

Even though Soldier's sacrifice by missing holidays with their loved ones, they don't spend the holidays alone. This year, Soldiers on Camp Liberty are spending Thanksgiving Day as a military family



# Leadership, Discipline Key to Success

A little more than two weeks ago I unfurled the colors of the 1st Cavalry Division at Camp Liberty, officially assuming control of the Multi-National Division - Baghdad's area of responsibility.

It was another great day for the First Team. Over the coming year, we will add to the 1st Cavalry Division's history of excellence and service to our nation.

MND-B consists of much more than the 1st Cavalry Division. We have troops from all across America, from every service and from our coalition partners. Nearly 80,000 strong, MND-B is the cornerstone of the military effort here in Iraq, just as Baghdad is the focal point of the Iraqi culture, economy and government.

In my mind, MND-B leads the charge for the coalition force effort here and sets the conditions for the future success, safety and stability for the Iraqi people.

Leadership is key.

As leaders, we will ask our Soldiers to do more during this mission than we ever have. We expect them to remain vigilant against attacks from cowardly terrorist elements while at the same time remaining culturally sensitive to the vast majority of the Iraqi populace who are

## Pegasus 6

Maj. Gen.  
Joseph F. Fil  
Jr.



simply trying to better themselves.

Leaders, oftentimes junior noncommissioned officers leading patrols throughout the city, must maintain operational awareness of their surroundings, be prepared to react to violent acts from the enemy and still be able to interact with the local populace in a respectful, professional manner.

Discipline throughout the ranks ensures our success. Leaders will lead, and instill the discipline within

their ranks to accomplish the task at hand. We need to put on our game faces every time we head out the gate, maintaining a watchful eye for the enemy, prepared to defeat any threat.

We need to take care of our troopers, just as they take care of the mission. Every Soldier, sailor, airman and Marine in the MND-B footprint is an invaluable commodity. We owe it to them to keep them ready, and keep them safe.

I have unwavering faith in the leaders within our organization, and the service members who fill our ranks. Together, we will make a difference here in the Iraqi capital because we remain focused on the mission, first, and our troopers, always.

Baghdad is the media center of Iraq. The world is watching us. America depends on us.

I am depending on each of you.

With a commitment to high standards, leadership involvement and determined discipline throughout our ranks, we will prevail in everything we do.

We have a great team. It's our team. It's the First Team!

## Is the Fourth Time a Charm?

# Well-Traveled Cav Mascot Back in Iraq

By Pfc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - "Trigger," the 1st Cavalry Division's mascot, got to stretch his legs for the first time in a long time Nov. 14, once removed from his shipping container.

Trigger is a life-sized horse, complete with circa 1800s saddle, stirrups and bri-

dle. He gets stuck in shipping containers when the Cav deploys. It's a good thing he's made out of plastic, or the stench would have been overwhelming upon arrival here in Baghdad.

Unveiling Trigger is a big event in for the division headquarters, yet it's nothing new for Master Sgt. Kevin Milligan, the division's commandant.

This is Milligan's third deployment

with Trigger.

Trigger was purchased in 1989 by the division as a morale booster and mascot. He got his name from the division's honor guard, which Milligan oversees as the commandant.

Back in 1990, Trigger and Milligan set off to Saudi Arabia for Desert Shield. Trigger was only two, and Milligan, a Union City, Tenn., native, was a new member of the honor guard.

"I unveiled Trigger on his very first deployment and he has deployed with Cav ever since then," Milligan said. He said the stallion replica reminds today's Cav troopers of their proud lineage.

"Trigger represents the Cav's past present and future," Milligan noted. "He represents freedom -- which is what all fallen Soldiers from past and present fought for. He represents all Soldiers who have ridden in a saddle for Cav."

Milligan said Trigger is also a bit of a celebrity.

"No matter where Trigger is, he brings smiles to people's faces. People are constantly trying to put their kids on Trigger and take pictures with him," said Milligan, a 20-year Army veteran with 11 years with the First Team.

"I wish I could bring him to meetings, it would make people smile, and it would make things go smoother," he added.

Trigger might not be able to make it to meetings, but he will stand tall inside the division's main headquarters building during the duration of the deployment here. Milligan said the horse stands for tradition, something for which the First Team prides itself.

"My advice to the generations to come is (to) keep the legacy, the legacy of freedom alive," Milligan said.

A life-sized plastic horse sitting inside the First Team headquarters is continuing the legacy. Trigger has deployed right along side his battle buddies, again.

Giddy-up!



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Office)

Staff Sgt. Duarte Fernandes, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1st Cavalry Division Honor Guard and native of Atwater, Calif., adjusts Trigger's saddle after taking him out of his shipping container at Camp Liberty, Iraq Nov. 14. The life-sized, plastic horse is a mascot for the division. (Right) Master Sgt. Kevin Milligan, a native of Union City, Tenn., and commandant for the 1st Cavalry Division, directs his troops to clean up the division mascot, Trigger.

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(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Col. Randal G. Martin, commander, 1169th Engineer Group receives his 'First Team' combat patch from Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for support, Nov. 18 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Soldiers can wear the combat patch after serving 30 days in Iraq.**

## Right of passage:

# Troops Earn Combat Patches

**By Spc. L.B. Edgar,  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A patch is meant to cover a hole in an article of clothing. In the Army, wearing a combat patch fills a void on the right sleeve of the Army combat uniform. When a Soldier fills in the missing panel, he is not only completing his duty uniform, but displaying his war-time service for the whole world to see.

The most recent recipients of the largest combat patch in the Army are the Soldiers of 1169th Engineer Group, an Army National Guard unit out of Huntsville, Ala., who received their shoulder sleeve insignia for war-time service here with Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, 1st Cavalry Division deputy commanding general for support, as a guest at the ceremony Nov. 18.

“Since 75 percent of the unit had never deployed, I wanted to do something special,” said Col. Randal G. Martin, commander, 1169th Eng. Grp.

Martin said receiving a combat patch is something a Soldier will never forget, no matter what the accomplishment means to him.

“It means a lot to me because the 1st Cav. Div. has

such a rich history and I’m proud to be a part of its history. I’m sure this next year is going to be another rich chapter,” said Martin, a native of Huntsville, Ala.

The ceremony was also important because the engineer group is providing an invaluable service to America’s ‘First Team’. The 1169th provides command and control of the 130th Eng. Battalion, which is charged with route clearing missions, and the 20th Eng. Bn., which handles construction projects, the 34-year veteran said.

“The group’s mission is to build bridges, literally and emotionally, with the people of Iraq. We need to show them we’re trying to better their country,” said Spc. Wesley Acord, personnel administrative specialist from Montgomery, Ala.

No matter the mission, for most Soldiers receiving a combat patch, the experience is a rite of passage.

For Sgt. Terri White, signal support specialist, with the 1169th, it means something to her family as well, she said.

“It’ll mean that my children will have more freedom and have the choice to serve,” said the Dothan, Ala., native. “I’d rather do it for them than have them have to do it.”

## *Stryker Brigade Heads Back Home*

**Stryker**

From Page 1

ceremony.

Over the past 16 months the 172nd suffered the loss of 26 fallen heroes and 350 Soldiers were wounded in action, said Maj. Michael Blankartz, the brigade public affairs officer. a native of Mobridge, S. D.

After 12 months of service in Northern Iraq, mainly Al Anbar, Rawaha and Mosul, the Arctic Wolves were



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Lt. Col. Mark Freitag, commander of the 4th Squadron, 14th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, and Command Sgt. Maj. David Dunham the 4th Squadron senior noncommissioned officer, case the unit's colors in a color casing ceremony on Camp Stryker Nov. 22.**

ordered to Baghdad for an additional four months of service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Staff Sgt. Yvonne Smith, a command group administrative assistant for the brigade.

The 172nd spent the final 106 days of its deployment conducting combat operations in Baghdad, said Maj. Tim Stiansen, brigade adjutant, from Telford, Penn.

“Just in support of Operation Together Forward (the last four months of the deployment) we cleared over 70,000 buildings in Baghdad,” said Blankartz, a native of Mobridge, S. D.

A return to their natural habitat of Alaska has been a long time coming for the Arctic Wolves.

“It will be exactly 16 months from the time our first troops stepped foot on the ground,” said Smith, who hails from San Antonio, Texas.

“Hopefully our presence here brought a lot of organizations together so that we have a sense of what we need to do next, without sacrificing lives of Soldiers and Iraqis,” Smith said. “It should be taken as a lesson learned. It’s not the Strykers alone. It’s engaging the people and showing them you are human.”

Blankartz said the Arctic Wolves had five Silver Star Medal recipients and the pack received the Valorous Unit Award from Gen. George C. Casey, the commanding general of the Multi-National Force – Iraq, for its exceptional service.

“For the strength of the pack is the wolf,” Shields quoted Rudyard Kipling to close the ceremony, “and the strength of the wolf is the pack.”

## News In Brief

### Iraqi Army Detains Two Suspected In Mortar Attack Near Taji

TAJI, Iraq -- Iraqi Army Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division detained two local nationals here Nov. 27 on a motorcycle carrying three mortar rounds and a large sum of money.

The two suspects were placed into custody after allegedly firing two mortar rounds into the 2nd Iraqi Brigade’s area of operations. The suspects were passing through an Iraqi checkpoint at the time of their detainment.

Iraqi Army soldiers were conducting a reconnaissance mission in the area after discovering mortar rounds had been fired in their vicinity. The two men were apprehended during this recon.

The suspects were detained for further questioning.

### Scouts Stop Suspected Smuggler

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, put a suspected weapons smuggler out of business when they met him at his doorstep late Nov. 22.

The Scout Platoon “Swamp Rats” from Schweinfurt, Germany, currently attached to 1st Cavalry Division’s 2nd Brigade Combat Team, in conjunction with another agency worked together for weeks to gather intelligence on the whereabouts and identity of the suspected weapons smuggler.

“It was a successful operation from the planning phase to the actual time of the hit. It all worked out,” said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Wilcoxon, the Swamp Rats’ platoon sergeant who calls Bushnell, Ill. home.

Wilcoxon’s team set up an outer cordon area and another team simply walked up on the suspect while he was on his porch. After detaining him, another team entered the house and started gathering evidence. According to Wilcoxon, the entire operation took roughly 45 minutes.

### Two Arrested in Funeral Procession

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAH-MUDIYAH, Iraq — Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division stopped a vehicle north of Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, discovering that the driver and passenger were heavily armed Nov. 24.

Soldiers found an Uzi submachine gun with a silencer in the vehicle, as well as a number of hand grenades, photographs of the driver and passenger with cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, and multiple false identification papers. The vehicle had infiltrated a funeral procession when it was stopped, but none of the people in the procession could identify the men.

The detainees were uncooperative during questioning by Iraqi troops and were taken to an Iraqi Army facility for further investigation.

### Operation Detains 10 and Seizes Cache

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Div., and Company D, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, detained 10 terrorist suspects and found a cache of improvised explosive device components near al Taqa, a village on the banks of the Euphrates southwest of Yusufiyah Nov. 25.

The 10 Iraqi males were caught attempting to emplace IEDs along a route which the U.S. forces were traveling.

Upon questioning, the group identified a cache site. The cache contained two pressure plates, three portable phones, four six-foot bundles of wire and a 300-foot roll of copper wire.

The cache and detainees were seized as part of Operation Polar Black Diamond, a combined air assault by 4-4, 6th IA Div. and 4-31 Inf. into the former al Qaeda sanctuary approximately 20 miles southwest of Baghdad. The detainees are being held for questioning by the Iraqi Army





(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Iraqi Army soldiers and paratroopers from Co. C, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, patrol through a town in south of Baghdad as part of an area reconnaissance mission of the area Nov. 24. While on patrol, many of the paratroopers would interact with the local people.**

## Two Countries, Two Uniforms, One Team on One Mission

**By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.**

BAGHDAD – Working side-by-side, members of an Iraqi scout platoon from 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Paratroopers from Company C, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, conducted a dismounted patrol of a neighborhood south of Baghdad Nov. 24.

The mission for this combined force consisted of conducting a reconnaissance and monitoring a local mosque to determine the activity in the area. First, a

reconnaissance of a specific location is conducted to provide better intelligence for the force operating in the charge that area, explained 2nd Lt. Eric Rudberg, Company C, 1-40 Cavalry Regiment.

“With this operation between ourselves and the Iraqi Army, we are getting to know how they (Iraqis) operate.”

“We are getting familiar with our surroundings, as well as getting to know the local population,” he continued.

Going step by step with their Iraqi counterparts, the paratroopers from Company C were more than happy to have their host nation’s military mem-

bers by their sides.

“The Iraqi soldiers were defiantly an asset to our mission,” Rudberg said.

“They were able to go right up to the local population and ask them things that were prudent to our mission success,” he continued.

While on patrol, many of the paratroopers would interact with the local people by shaking hands, passing out candy and toys and waving.

“One of our priorities here in Iraq is to show that the coalition forces are not here to harm anyone, but that we are here to help build a more secure area for their

families,” said Rudberg.

Messages from the local mosque gives the people of the area an update on current events, often swaying them in one direction or another, added Rudberg.

“It is vital to our mission [to know what is being said to the people], because it is like our weekly news about that area,” he said.

Rudberg lauded the joint effort with the Iraqi Army following the patrol.

“With the help from the Iraqi Army, our mission was a successful one,” Rudberg said. “We plan on having many successful missions to follow.”



(Photo by Sgt. J.H. French, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Maj. Gen. Qais Hamza Al-Mamori, Iraqi police chief for the Babil Province, waits to sign the paperwork to officially transfer a female detainee into Iraqi police custody in Kalsu, Iraq Nov. 27. Qais requested that the detainee be turned over to IP custody so she could be released in accordance with Iraqi law.**



**Maj. Gen. Qais Hamza Al-Mamori, the Babil Province Iraqi police chief (far right), escorts a female detainee to a waiting Iraqi police vehicle Nov. 27.**

## IP’s Take Charge of Female Detainee

**By 4th BCT , 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs**

KALSU, Iraq – Maj. Gen. Qais Hamza Al-Mamori, Iraqi police chief for the Babil Province, negotiated the release of a female prisoner who was detained by coalition forces for allegedly helping to place improvised explosive devices.

Qais requested that the detainee be turned over to IP custody so she could be released in accordance with Iraqi law.

The woman was detained by the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Oct. 30, when an IED was found near her house and

the detonation wire led to an area on her property near the home.

Upon investigation, Iraqi Army troops and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment found wire matching the IED’s detonation wire and other IED materials in her home.

With Qais and the Iraqi government asserting control over the province and establishing security of the area, coalition forces released the woman into his custody.

Working together, the IP’s and coalition forces are establishing a cohesive working relationship to help build the foundations of a secure province.



# Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Visits Taji

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey, the senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, took time Nov. 24 to visit 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers at the Taji Cinema Theater here.

The command sergeant major told troops that his message was a simple one as he pointed out Soldiers in the crowd, joking with them and taking the opportunity to get to know a little bit about these cavalry troopers.

In between the "good-natured" exchanges, Gainey laid out his message.

"Professionalism is our job," said Gainey. "Set the standard 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Gainey told his audience that Soldiers who are new to the theater of operations in Iraq actually have an advantage over those who are veterans of previous Operation Iraqi Freedom rotations.

"You who have been here before have the expectation of things running the same way as the last time you were here," said Gainey, who then went on to explain that this line of thinking is similar to playing football. "You play Friday night and win; but you lose the next game



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey, senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited First Team troops Nov. 24 at the Taji Cinema Theater on Camp Taji, Iraq.**

because your thinking was the same. You played exactly the same way as you did the last time."

Gainey added that the Soldiers need to remember that they are facing an observant, adaptive enemy.

"The enemy is smart...act like this is the first game, the first season, the first time," said Gainey. "Forget (about the last time), do it the way it is now. I've been here a lot of times, and every day is different. If you get

complacent, you won't be the one getting killed, but your buddy will."

Gainey told the Soldiers that it is perfectly natural to miss your family while deployed, but that the troops should stay focused on the mission by finding ways to keep their minds off of what's going on at home.

"Get yourself involved in something to help get your mind off of missing your family," he said. "Physical fitness, mental fitness and emotional fitness are all

very important."

Gainey explained that some of the things he has done while being away from family include becoming a part of volunteer groups. He suggested that Soldiers can find other ways to keep their minds off of things at home, like seeking out educational opportunities or working out at the gym.

"I didn't sit around worrying about the fact that I was going to be away from them," he said. "You can't worry about what you

can't change."

Gainey left the Troopers with some parting advice.

"Spend your time wisely and be professionals," said Gainey, adding, "Pride is contagious. Share the pride you have with each other."

Soldiers who heard Gainey speak said it was a worthwhile experience.

"I was honored to hear the sergeant major speak," said Billings, Mont. native Pfc. Erica Wells from Company E, 615th Air Support Battalion. "It definitely cheered me up to know that he cared enough to come and speak to us and share his feelings."

"He really knows how to motivate you. The things he spoke on were very important," she said.

"He was very personable and really taught us quite a bit," added Pfc. Ashley Howard, a truck driver for Company A, 615th Air Support Battalion and a Fayetteville, N.C. native.

Once finished speaking, Gainey pulled some Soldiers from the audience and presented coins to them.

At the end of his visit, Gainey took a tour of one of the 15th Sustainment Brigade's vehicle yards on the camp where Soldiers were placing new, improved armor on their humvees.

## Arriving Brigade's Boots Hit the Ground in Iraq Running

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Soldiers of the Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division have arrived in Iraq.

Over the past few weeks, the brigade's nearly 4,500 Soldiers have been moving into their areas of responsibility (AOR) here as they take over for their counterparts in the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 4th Infantry Division.

According to senior officials within the brigade, their goal during their one-year rotation will be to work with the Iraqi people to provide a safe, secure and stable environment inside their AOR for the Iraqis.

For Capt. Marvin Ross, commander for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment and a native of Channelview, Texas, his battery's mission involves three responsibilities: counter-fire missions, acting as tower guards and providing gate security.

Ross said he hopes his Soldiers take away some important life lessons from their mission here to include the reason why they are currently serving overseas.

"I hope they take to heart the fact that we're here to make a difference as we assist the Iraqi government and Iraqi security forces and see them through to their goal of becoming a legitimate, governed state," said Ross.

"Once we complete the transfer of authority (with the 4th Int. Div.), we'll get into a regular rhythm or battle routine," added Ross. "As we keep busy, eventually the time will fly by for the Soldiers."

In the meantime, Ross's troops and other Soldiers in the brigade, have been getting settled into their two-person trailers, which serve as their living quarters, and into their work areas.

In the next few weeks, Soldiers will

continue unloading their equipment and starting their missions which will include patrols throughout the AOR.

The rotation marks the second time that Fort Hood, Texas native, Sgt. Chester Temple, a unit supply specialist with Battery A, has served in Iraq.

"I hope to learn how to run the logistical aspects of my job better during the wartime experience," said Temple, who currently has a brother returning from Iraq with the 4th Inf. Div. and another brother serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq. Before leaving for Iraq, Temple's

father who retired after 24 years in the Army and served in both Vietnam and Grenada had some parting advice for his three sons who have all served in Iraq.

"He told us to 'Keep your head down, but keep your butt lower!'" said Temple.

Some of the younger Soldiers pulling their first tours in Iraq said they look forward to their mission and that they will be looking out for one another.

"I want to make sure that I get home alive and that everyone else comes home alive," said Pfc. Adam Boland, a gun truck diver for Company A, 115th Brigade

Support Battalion.

Boland, a native of Minnetonka, Minn., will be spending his time in Iraq pulling security during convoy operations.

Portland, Ore. native Pfc. Joshua Drummond, is a fire direction control specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt. who will work as a radio telephone operator during his tour. He echoed similar Boland's sentiments.

"I hope that we can make things safer for the people who come here after we're gone," he said.



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**After weeks of training in Kuwait, Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, arrive at Camp Taji, Iraq. These Fort Hood, Texas-based Soldiers are beginning their year-long mission north of the Iraqi capital.**



# Tankers Make Best of Home Away From Home

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – A convoy through the busy streets of Baghdad is not the usual Sunday drive, but for a group of tanker Soldiers it is a normal Sunday duty.

For a group of tankers assigned to 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry

Division, now attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, their mission of relieving their fellow tankers at an observation point Nov. 12 was a quiet drive and without any fanfare.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Christopher West, a platoon sergeant assigned to Company A, their mission, although important, comes with very little "excitement." Their mission is kept a

secret due to safety concerns. Their location is also kept unknown due to their mission.

For two weeks at a time, the tankers live and operate in an area roughly the size of a football field. The amenities are very few. From their living quarters to their shower and bathroom facilities, they all have taken a crash course in carpentry to make life out in the middle of nowhere a little more bearable, said 1st Sgt. Michael Moser, the senior enlisted soldier in Company A.

"It used to be worse here," said West, a native of Leesville, La. "They've done a lot to make it better."

When there isn't too much going on, the Soldiers will take a few minutes to play a little two-on-two basketball.

Moser makes frequent convoys from Forward Operating Base Falcon to their working area to provide mail, hot meals and other supplies to make their stay on their little "island" just a bit more tolerable. It's also to provide the Soldiers with a hot meal rather than the Meals Ready to Eat.

According to West, when they come back to FOB Falcon, the Soldiers use that time to not only personally recover from their two-week mission, but also to take care of maintenance issues they might have. All in all, their mission isn't a bad one, according to the Soldiers who live and operate there. Some of them admit, when away from FOB Falcon, they seem to find it is a little more relaxed, because, for the most part it belongs to them.

According to West, their area is run by him and their other platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Jefferey Crossman of Bloomington, Ill. The two take turns operating their area. They use their forward area to run their patrols throughout their sector in Baghdad. Although, it's not as good as some of the FOBs throughout Baghdad, it's theirs.

Even though their time is brief in their area, Co. A commander, Capt. Derrick Daniels, makes a point to go out and conduct promotion and award ceremonies.

"It's important to do these types of things," he told his troops during a ceremony in which he promoted four.



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Pfc. Myron Hall, from Prattville, Ala., gets a mock "beating" from Spc. Jacob Hemphill of Morehouse, Mo., as squad members rough-house between missions. Both Soldiers are assigned to 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, now attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. (Left) Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, now attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cav. Div. enjoy a little game of basketball during down time.

## Concern About Friends More Important Than Bullet Wound

By Spc. Alexis Harrison  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The troops from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, currently attached to the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, have been patrolling the war-torn streets of the Al Doura since their transfer of authority earlier this month.

Since then, the battalion has encountered just about everything one would expect when entering a hostile area. Roadside bombs, ambushes and hostility were a normal part of any patrol through the area. What was uncommon was the battalion had a nearly flawless track record of going back to the Forward Operating Base Falcon unscathed.

That is until Nov. 22.

Spc. Erin Killian, from St. Louis, was shot in his leg during a routine patrol through one of the worst areas in the capital city. Even as he recovers from his wound, he's more concerned about his comrades.

"I want to get back out there with my guys," Killian said. "There are more important things than me. I'm still alive."

Not only is he alive and ambitious to get back with his friends, he was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for being wounded in action.

He was visited by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division commander, Col. Bryan Roberts, and the brigade's top-ranking noncommissioned officer Command



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Erin Killian, a St. Louis native with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, is awarded the Purple Heart Medal by Col. Bryan Roberts, commander, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., for injuries suffered during a mission in the Al Doura District, Baghdad, Nov. 24.

Sgt. Maj. James Lee.

"I had the chance to reward a true hero," Roberts said. "He's tough. He's definitely the kind of Soldier every unit needs."

Roberts explained the importance of the medal as not just an award for getting injured, but the bravery shown while in action.

"Every time Soldiers are on a mission, they know what could happen," he remarked. "Guys out there are

unafraid. They fight with instinct. They do the right thing without even thinking about it."

Killian recounted the events of that day. He was assisting his teammates by providing security when he rounded a corner and was met with small arms fire. He knew immediately he had been hit.

He quickly took cover. Unfortunately, the medic that was with his group was trapped on the other side of the street. With a clear presence of mind, he stayed calm and gave himself first aid while his team took care of business.

"I stayed down for about 10 minutes," he said. "It was harder to calm down the two privates with us than me."

When Roberts asked Killian how he felt, Killian proudly responded by saying he want to be with his friends on the battlefield.

After One-Station Unit Training, Killian was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment (Air Assault). He joined them for his first tour through Iraq. He has been a part of the same platoon now for the better part of four years.

After modularity changes, the 2-506th became the 2nd BCT of the 2nd Infantry Division. Killian and most of his friends stayed with the unit after the changes.

While at the hospital resting, Killian made sure to call his parents to let them know he was all right. He'll be headed to Germany for some rest and rehabilitation before he goes home or back to FOB Falcon with his friends.

"I feel fine," he said. "I have to go through the proper steps to get better, so I can get back out there with my guys."



# Mechanics Make Quick, Smooth Iraq Transition

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq - The 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's team of mechanics took over operations from the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), almost immediately after arriving to Forward Operating Base Prosperity in Baghdad.

According to Phoenix native Sgt. 1st Class John P. Schulz, the 2nd BSTB's motor sergeant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, he decided to start their operations as early as possible because that was the way he has always known it to be successful through his other deployments.

"I told them (4th BSTB's mechanics) we wanted to take over with their guidance," Schulz said.

"Those guys need time to get out of here. So, everyone sat back and let us do it," he said.

Schulz credits their smooth transition to his mechanics' eagerness to start their mission.

"They have been outstanding," he said of his team. "Since we were at Camp Buehring [in Kuwait], they have been chopping at the bit to get over here and finally start working. I've run out of things for them to do; they are all over it."

Yet, Schulz credits the 4th BSTB mechanics for leaving their motor pool a lot better than they found it to be and attributes this as the single, biggest reason why his team has been working to put deadlined vehicles back on the road, quickly installing humvee upgrades, and working on improving their working areas.

"This place is set up better than at Fort

Hood [Texas]," he said.

Spc. John M. Zubek, a track vehicle mechanic assigned to HHC, 4th BSTB, and a native of Los Angeles, said his team tried to provide as much help to the "new guys" as possible during the transition period.

"It's been working out great," he said. "They have more mechanics than we could have imagined, and we are more than willing to show them how to do things here."

Zubek said during his time in Iraq, he and his team developed their way of doing things. In most cases, it was new tools or new ways of using old tools.

"There are some small shortcuts to make stuff easier out here, and they [2nd BSTB mechanics] have been very insightful and asking questions when they have to," he said. "They are going to do really well. I'm sure by the time 1st Cav. will have their replacements, they will have developed their own methods of doing things quicker."

For 2nd BSTB mechanics like Sgt. Juan Santibanez, an HHC, 2nd BSTB light-wheeled mechanic and the recovery non-commissioned officer-in-charge, many of his guys were not familiar with the M1114 up-armored humvee's transmission and air conditioning system.

"These guys, from the 4th STB, hooked it up for us," he said. "They came up with a plan, and that plan worked. So, we've been following their SOPs (standing operating procedures)."

The 2nd BSTB mechanics were left with a maintenance shop capable of doing almost everything they need to perform their mission while in Iraq, according to Santibanez of Michoacan, Mexico.

Yet, they have been using their talents and know-how to start small projects such as putting in working tables, pressure wash stations, and setting up communications satellites so they can stop sending curriers to send up manual reports.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Spc. Loren Hayes, a track mechanic with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, does some welding work on a table at his new home base in Baghdad.**



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Pfc. Jason Ferris, a gunner for 1st Platoon, Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, pulls security in the turret for his platoon during a mission in Baghdad Nov. 26. Ferris, a Painesville, Ohio, native acts as the eyes of the platoon while on mission**

# Security Soldiers Keep EOD Teams, Streets Safer

By Pfc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - A group of Soldiers stand in line for lunch as they jokingly make fun of one another, like good friends do, until they get a call on the radio - "An improvised explosive device has been found."

Before the voice in the radio can finish, the Soldiers take off in a sprint toward their humvees.

In a matter of minutes, Soldiers from 1st Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, are geared up and mounted in their up-armored trucks ready for their mission.

The platoon's mission - to provide security for the explosive ordnance disposal team while they work keeping other Soldiers safe.

Each Soldier in the security team has an equally important job to accomplish, but there is only one guy with a full view of what is really going on, the gunner.

"My job is to provide rear security for EOD and the rest of my platoon while we are on missions," said Spc. Reginald Winston, a gunner for 1st Platoon. "When the call comes down I gear up, climb up the turret, quickly slam down an energy drink and say the Lord's Prayer," said Winston, a native of Casagrande, Ariz. "Then we roll."

While driving on the streets of Baghdad a plethora of thoughts may run through Soldier's heads, but for 24-year-old Winston his teammates safety is on his mind.

"I get a little nervous when I'm in the gunner's

hatch, but my main focus is being the eyes for the rest of the guys in the truck. I'm constantly scanning for snipers and more IEDs," he said.

He wants to keep his platoon safe as possible and wants to give EOD a safe environment in which to work, Winston added.

"Everyone wants to keep EOD safe. They are the ones equipped to detonate IEDs, so they aren't hurting Soldiers," Winston explained.

Soldiers are trained for the urban combat environment. They attend many classes on IEDs and how to spot things that our out of place.

Winston knows when something is out of place on a route he has taken before. He feels it in his gut when something is wrong, he said.

"It makes me feel good that other Soldiers are spotting these IEDs ahead of time. It helps me know that all of our class time is worth it in the end," said Winston, who has already spent two years in a combat zone.

"I trust the guys in my platoon whole heartedly," Winston said. "I know how well they have been trained. Whatever my team leader says is gold. I know he wouldn't steer us wrong."

When they get to the sight of the IED, Winston's platoon provides security while EOD works quickly to detonate them safely.

The security team knows their mission is almost complete when the explosive technicians detonate the find, Winston said. It's then time to head back and prepare for the next mission.





(Photos by Sgt 1st Class Matthew Lipscomb, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cav. Reg., 82nd Airborne Division)

**Capt. Andrew Hercik, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, hands out a new pair of shoes to a young Iraqi boy during a mission to give out soccer balls, clothing and shoes to local Iraqi villages in the Diyala province, Nov. 6.**

## ***Joint Mission Provides Supplies to Diyala Citizens***

**By Spc. Ryan Stroud  
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

BALAD RUZ, Iraq (Nov. 6, 2006) - While reducing violence is a main focus for both Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, not all missions revolve around capturing the enemy. Members of the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and the 5th Iraqi Army are out to prove that.

Convoys headed out to different villages in the Diyala province, Nov. 6, as the Soldiers from 5-73 together with 5th Iraqi Army soldiers were armed with a different type of ammunition -- soccer balls, clothing and shoes.

"We went out to help get the Iraqi Army on the civilian's good side," said Spc. Randell Marshall, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5-73, and a native of Fitzgerald, Ga., understanding why its important for the Iraqi citizens to have confidence in their security forces.

"We donated a lot of supplies, clothing, shoes and soccer balls so the Iraqi Army could give those out," he added.

"The main point behind the mission was to build a rapport between the Iraqi Army and the local citizens," said Capt. John Pratt, Company B, 404th Civil Affairs.

"It's for the locals to see their army isn't just for going on raids and detaining people, they are here also because they care and want to help," he continued. "They are not the Shia Army or Kurdish Army; they are all of Iraq's Army."

The Soldiers were hoping the mission would be a positive one as they had many boxes of supplies to hand out. When they arrived, they were greeted with many smiling faces.

"It was a very positive mission," said Pratt. "The gifts that were given out had a positive reaction on the locals."

"We stopped at one village and they were thrilled to see us," added Marshall. "We passed out our supplies to them and stayed there for a few hours. They even cooked for us."

"I saw kids already shivering," he added. "It's not even cold to us, but to them it's freezing. That is why missions for handing out supplies to help the villagers are really important."

"The experience was overwhelming," said Spc. Kevin Geis, HHT, 5-73. The kids are very appreciative of what



**Local Iraqi citizens sit and wait as Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Division pass out supplies donated by the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, Nov. 6.**

we can give them. "They were smiling and cheering, and giving us the thumbs up. It's a great feeling."

Both Soldiers from 5-73 and the Iraqi Army feel these missions will leave a lasting effect on the community, Marshall said. He also added he hopes this will help the Iraqi Army in their future missions.

"We are trying to help the Iraqi Army out with helping the communities out so when we leave, the Iraqi Army will be able to go out and do these kinds of missions on their own," Marshall said.

"These missions build trust and respect," added Pratt. "When the locals look at us, they see a force that is not going to take sides," he continued. "They see a professional Army who is here to establish justice."

"Some of the citizens have had doubts about the Iraqi government and its army. These missions help establish that trust that is needed," Pratt said. "U.S. Coalition Forces work with the Iraqi Army daily on these types of

missions and through these missions, we train the Iraqi Army in becoming a professional organization," Pratt said.

But Marshall and Geis both agree the best part of the supply missions is seeing the children after they have received their new gifts.

"Seeing the kids smile is the best part of the mission," said Marshall. "The weather is changing and to see them smile when we hand out winter clothes and shoes to those who are barefooted, it's a nice feeling."

"Watching these kids, it's really a nice thing because you get to see the good side of Iraqi people and not the 'bad guys' running around," he added. "They are good people."

"This is the best mission you can go on," said Geis. "These kids are the leaders in the next 15 to 20 years, and we might have a lasting effect on them with these missions."



## ***Air Cavalry in Iraq:***

# First Impressions, Lasting Impressions

**By Sgt. Robert Strain**  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade are starting to get settled, both in their work places – slowly taking over daily duties and responsibilities from the 4th Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade – and in their living areas, making

them seem a little less like Iraq and a little more like home.

For Pvt. E.J. Sumera, a personnel specialist with the brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the living conditions here are exactly what he had come to expect from talking with his fellow Soldiers, many of whom have already completed tours here supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom II in 2004-2005. Sumera

said it was the working conditions that surprised him. In addition to the long, irregular hours he worked, he was working with a lot more people than he was used to working with back at Fort Hood, Texas, because of a combined brigade personnel office.

A two-year Army veteran from Fullerton, Calif., Sumera asked a lot of people before the unit deployed about what he could expect once here in Iraq, but he didn't really process that information before hitting the ground in Taji, he said.

Although he has not been deployed to other areas, fellow Soldiers who have been to other locations in Iraq said Camp Taji is one of the best places to be, Sumera said.

Between working in his office and

taking advantage of all the other things Camp Taji has to offer, such as the Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities, Sumera expects to keep busy during the brigade's year-long deployment.

He has found time to make his room seem a little more like home, however; putting up photos of friends and family and hanging up a rosary given to him by his grandmother has made things easier, Sumera said.

The brigade's senior paralegal non-commissioned officer, Staff Sgt. Christa Sanchez, has been through this all before. She was deployed with the brigade from April 2004 until April 2005, during the division's last deployment to Iraq.

The camp underwent a drastic change over the course of the last deployment, and improvements were expected to continue when the brigade redeployed back to Fort Hood last year, Sanchez said.

"I expected it to be a lot better [than the brigade left it]," said the San Antonio native. "It is in a lot of ways ... but I'm surprised that a lot more hadn't got done."

Sanchez explained that there were a lot of improvements around the camp. Many buildings were rebuilt; other buildings were renovated; and the roads were "paved" with gravel and given names, but there were also a lot of things that hadn't changed.

"A lot of things stayed the same," Sanchez said. "For the most part it's what I expected it to be."

With roughly two-thirds of the brigade already at Camp Taji, as their relief-in-place transition is under way with the 4th Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade.



(Photo by Sgt. Robert J. Strain, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs)

Pvt. E.J. Sumera, (above and right) a personnel specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, sets up his notebook computer in the personnel section at the brigade headquarters on Camp Taji, Iraq, Oct. 24. Sumera, a native of Fullerton, Calif., said the conditions at the camp were pretty much what he expected from talking with fellow Soldiers that have been here before.



## Keeping Soldiers Safe by Keeping Weapons Working

**By Spc. Nathan Hoskins**  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait –Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment made good use of their time last month as they waited to move north from

Kuwait to Iraq.

The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers attended an armorers course instructed by Military Professionals Resource Incorporated.

The class focused on giving company level armorers the ability to access, repair and fine-tune a weapons sys-

tem, said the MPRI instructor, who asked not to be identified.

Soldiers who took the class could later train other Soldiers in the unit to be company level armorers, as well.

"This class benefits the whole unit. [Because of this class,] these young armorers know what to look for. They can correct problems and order adequate parts," said Sgt. Eric Kay from Georgetown, Del., a door gunner for Company A, 3-227th.

Although it was an armorers' class, other Soldiers attended so they could be put on a list of back-up armorers.

Many of the battalion's armorers wear other hats, serving in positions such as crew chief. The class gives the units the ability to have other knowledgeable Soldiers on the ground to take up the slack while the armorer is flying, said Spc. Joel Redman from Page, Ariz., a Black Hawk crew chief for Company C.

With missions running all the time, having more Soldiers within the brigade with this knowledge and capability is beneficial to the mission in Iraq, said Col. Daniel Shanahan, commander of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, who observed the Soldiers during class before moving north to Kuwait.

During the class, Soldiers had to disassemble, inspect and reassemble the .50-caliber machine gun and later the M-9 pistol.

Though the Soldiers got hands-on practice on numerous weapons systems throughout their class time, the .50-caliber machine gun was the most complicated weapon system they dealt with, said the MPRI instructor.

Still, no matter how complicated, Soldiers paid close attention – many of them taking notes. They realized that their fellow Soldier's lives depended on a working weapon, said Kay.

"This class ensures survivability. When it's all said and done, your weapon's your last friend. It's never going to let you down if you don't let it down," said Kay.



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Fairfax, Va., native Pfc. Lakita Jackson, an armorer from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade peers down the sights while inspecting her .50-caliber machine gun during an armorers course Oct. 22 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The two-day course taught the Soldiers the ins and outs of several weapons systems.



# Polar Bears Air Assault into Terrorist Safe Haven

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

QARGHULI VILLAGE, Iraq — Qarghulli Village has long been known as a safe haven for terrorists. For several months the area had not been patrolled by U.S. forces because of the danger it posed. Knowing the high enemy threat in the area did not stop Commando Brigade infantrymen from going in.

Soldiers from the Company D, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment “Polar Bears,” 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), teamed up with soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, to conduct an air assault mission, Operation Polar Black Diamond, into Quarghuli Village on the early morning of Nov. 25.

As the Soldiers boarded one of the four helicopters that took them from Mahmudiyah, Iraq, to Qarghuli Village they shared their thoughts of the mission.

“I think this mission will help to eliminate the terrorist activity in the area,” said Sgt Jereme Brown, a 4-31 infantryman and native of Moody, Ala. “We are going in there to make it a safer place for the Iraqi people.”

When the Soldiers landed to their interim destination they found themselves on some of the most unforgiving terrain. They had to push through canals, muddy fields and even across barbed wire while the night-vision goggles offered their only form of sight. Although the terrain was tough and the company found themselves lying in fields filled with cow manure as they pulled security, they stayed focused on the mission.

The troops knew that their mission would not be complete until they established the battle position in the village. The battle position established would be the western most outpost in the Polar Bear area of operations.

During the foot march the U.S. and Iraqi soldiers worked together to clear houses in the area. They found a total of three AK-47s and magazines in the houses they searched.

After seven hours of foot marching the Soldiers had finally reached their destination – the battle position they had to establish.

As soon as the Soldiers arrived to their new home they immediately started pulling security and patrolling



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs)

**Pvt. Arthur Rocha (right), an infantryman with the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment “Polar Bears,” 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and native of Fertile, Minn., searches a haystack for hidden weapons in Qarghulli Village, Iraq, Nov. 25.**

the local area looking for suspicious activity.

Spc. Katherine Cobb, a female search team member attached to 4-31, spoke of what it was like to be a part of the mission.

As the Soldiers patrolled the area they saw ten Iraqis placing improvised-explosive devices in culvert locations along Route Malibu. The Iraqi soldiers quickly detained them for further questioning.

“I am happy we found the terrorists who were placing IEDs on the road,” said Lt. Ahmed, and Iraqi soldier with 4th Batt., 4th Bde. 6th IA Div. “I am here because I want to

help my country, the Iraqi people and my Army friends.”

Upon further questioning the Iraq soldiers were given information of terrorists and caches in the local area.

“I am confident with the Iraqi army,” said Sgt. Albert Lopez, a 4-31 infantryman from San Pedro, Calif. “I have worked with the Iraqi soldiers since I have been in Iraq and I am confident about what they are doing.”

One of the detainees led the U.S. troops and Iraqi soldiers to the weapons caches where items such as spools of wire, two pressure plates, three portable phones, five manuals about portable phones and a large metal object with wheels buried in the ground. They also uncovered a buried container that terrorists frequently use to hide weapons.

“The Soldiers have performed well on this mission as they do on all missions,” said Capt. Don Jamosles, Company D, 4-31 commander and native of Salinas, Calif. “My Soldiers have been working well with the Iraqi Soldiers on this mission. They (the U.S. Soldiers) provided outer security of the area while the Iraqis conducted searches themselves.”

Jamosles went on to describe what it was like working with the IA during the mission.

“The Iraqi soldiers have done an excellent job and are showing improvement in taking control of situations themselves,” he said.

Although the Soldiers successfully established the battle position the enemy threat was still present.

“While I was on top of the house I heard a loud bang so I got down on the ground,” said 2nd Lt. Thad Wescott, a native of Sterling, Ill., who serves as a 4-31 platoon leader. “I did not realize I was shot until I saw blood. I am thankful I am alive.”

Wescott was shot by an enemy sniper while manning the roof of the house. Sgt. Sean Sanders, a medic with 4-31 and native of Stewart, Fla., described what it was like to treat Wescott, whose wound was slight.

“Any time I go on a mission I always hope that I do not have to work ... If I do not have to work that means no one got hurt,” Sanders said.

The Soldiers of Company D will continue to man the battle position as long until the area is safe from terrorists.

“We will continue to provide force protection for the battle position until there is freedom of movement along Route Malibu,” Jamosles said.



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs)

## Cav Troops Foster Closer Ties

**2nd Lt. Jeffrey Archer, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, hands out felt-tip pens to children in the village of Ali As-Salem, Iraq, Nov. 22. Soldiers from the squadron distributed school supplies to students and teachers.**



# Troops Keep LT Moving on Road to Success

By 1st Lt. Robert Murray  
1-22nd Inf., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—Being the new guy in any job can be a difficult challenge, but becoming an infantry platoon leader more than halfway into a deployment can be one of the most daunting tasks given to a young second lieutenant. You do not know what to expect from your platoon because they have been training and fighting with their former platoon leader for over a year.

That is exactly what 2nd Lt. Stuart W. Keogh faced when arrived here in August. Keogh is the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon “Roughnecks,” Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

On his first night on the job, he and his platoon were tasked to go on a mission and detain a brigade-level target. He received the mission before even finishing his initial inventories.

Still, he felt confident in his Soldiers’ abilities to take on the mission.

“Of course I do,” said the Wayland, Mass., native at the time. “I know that my platoon has been doing this for eight months and the Soldiers know how to execute the plan.”

Keogh attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and received his Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in international relations.

He graduated in the spring of 2005 and received his commission as an infantry officer through Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.

He follows his grandfather, father and brother, who have all served in the Army. He arrived here after completing the infantry officer basic course and Ranger school.

With the help of his platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Davila and his squad leaders, Keogh has led his platoon on 30 raids and has found numerous weapons



(Photo by 1st Lt. Robert Murray, Co. A, 1-22 Inf., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

**2nd Lt. Stuart Keogh, of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, exchanges a ‘high-five’ with a local Iraqi boy from the Agerquf area of western Baghdad.**

caches.

The largest cache to date consisted of eleven 300-pound bombs, numerous rocket-propelled grenade rounds and material for making roadside bombs.

“As a new platoon leader, he has exceeded my expectations,” Davila said of his “LT.” He said Keogh has made a smooth transition to becoming a platoon leader.

Keogh thought the transition was

going to be more of a challenge. He said it was easy due to the caliber of the Soldiers and noncommissioned officers in his platoon.

Keogh said his main goal for this deployment is to get everyone in his platoon safely home and to leave the country a little better than it was when he got here. He said that being an infantry platoon leader in combat, aside from being a challenging job, has also been the most

rewarding and enjoyable job he could have.

Down the road, Keogh said he would like to either try to go through Special Forces training or wait to get his company command. Keogh said he only has one regret about this deployment.

“I wish I could have had more time with my platoon,” he said. “It has been an honor and a privilege being the platoon leader for ‘Roughnecks.’”

## Cool Under Pressure: Medics Deliver When it Matters

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – The medics of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division train hard in order to save the lives of any Soldier and, sometimes, that includes the lives of Soldiers they work with on a daily basis.

These medics found out quickly they have little time to adjust from garrison to combat once in Iraq.

Sgt. Bambi Sharpe, the supply and evacuation non-commissioned officer in charge for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, of Rocky Mount, N.C., said the new medics did a wonderful job when several casualties came in after a mortar attack.

“I thought, initially, we were going to have people choke up,” Sharpe said, “but they got right in there and got their hands dirty. I am very proud of them.”

Sharpe said seasoned and new medics are stepping up and doing what needs to be done to properly care for patients.

Pfc. Heaven Gallop, a medic with HHC, BSTB, from Winston, S.C., said she wanted to be a medic since she was a little girl. She used to go around trying to bandage animals and other children whenever they were hurt.

“I grew up watching war movies with my father,” she said. “I wanted to be the one out there with the face paint and helping.”

Gallop said the medical team for her brigade, with a mix of medics and physician’s assistants, offers her a great environment to continue learning about the medical field.

When her first patient came in, Gallop said the training paid off.

“You don’t really have time to freak out. You don’t have time to process it,” she said. “You can only concen-

trate on the patient and then later reflect on it. You always learn from each patient because they’re different.”

Gallop said it’s rewarding when a patient looks at her and knows they can depend on her. She also feels good when she’s done the best she can to help someone.

Pfc. Chris Llewellyn, of Sacramento, Calif., a medic with HHC, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, said even though this is his first deployment, he isn’t feeling too apprehensive.

“I had more anxiety before I got here than since I’ve been here,” he said.

The first time Llewellyn toured the aid station, there was a mortar attack and he lights went out. Several casualties came in, but the trauma training he received prepared him for the emergency and the outage.

Aside from treating casualties, Llewellyn said he is learning how to manage sick call, which includes learning about medications and how to tell what is normal by listening to someone’s heart and lungs.

Pvt. Charlie Pennington of Indianapolis, a line medic with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment. He said he was a pre-med major before joining the Army. His interest is orthopedics, but he enjoys it all aspects of health care.

This is his first deployment and Pennington hasn’t had to treat a casualty yet while out on patrol.

“We’ve been shot at, but no one’s been hurt,” he said.

Even though he hasn’t treated anyone yet, Pennington feels prepared because of the experience he received at medical school. Pennington said he was also an emergency medical technician in high school.

Medics not only have to learn the technical aspects of their job, they may have to put their knowledge to use on those they know.

For Sharpe, that is the hardest part of her job.

“It’s hard to work on someone you know who is on



(Photo by Spc. Courtney Marulli, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Pfc. Chris Llewellyn, a medic with the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, preps Spc. Clint Zeller for an intravenous injection at Forward Operating Base Loyalty, Iraq.**

the table,” she said. “I was a line medic last time and it got real personal. Those guys are the one’s who have your back, no matter what.”





(Photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr. (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Johndrow (right) uncase the 1st Cavalry Division flag during a Transfer of Authority ceremony here Nov. 15. The “First Team” takes over control of the Multi-National Division – Baghdad from the 4th Infantry Division, who now returns to its Fort Hood, Texas home.**



(Photo by Spc. Rodney Foliente, 4th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald T. Riling, of the 4th Infantry Division salutes in front of the honor guard during a transfer authority ceremony for the Multi-National Division-Baghdad headquarters Nov. 15.**

**By Spc. Karl Johnson  
363rd Mobile Public Affairs  
Detachment**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraqi -- Under the clear, morning skies of a promising new day in Baghdad, the 1st Cavalry Division took the reigns for Multi-National Division - Baghdad from the 4th Infantry Division during a transfer of authority ceremony here Nov. 15.

The ceremony honored the hard work and sacrifices of the departing “Ironhorse Division,” and looked forward to future challenges and successes to be garnered by the “First Team.”

Presiding over the ceremony was Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commanding general, Multi-National Corps - Iraq. Chiarelli, no stranger to the 1st Cav. Div., was well suited for his role.

Less than two years ago, he commanded the “First Team” during their first rotation as MND-B.

“It seems like only yesterday that I led the ‘First Team’ here,” said Chiarelli. “I know you will build on the exceptional success of the 4th Infantry Division. I have complete confidence that you (First Team) will make the difference.

“The TOA is a symbol of the commitment of the coalition to the people of Iraq,” said Chiarelli. He emphasized that “our commitment has not wavered.” “This has indeed been a challenging time in Iraq,” he noted. He said in this complex

atmosphere, “... few victories have been achieved.”

The MNC-I commander said they accomplished during their tenure.

He said the Soldiers had a clear vision of the mission, including increased electivity, increased security, and an increase in trained Iraqi Security Forces.

“This is the decisive period of the war,” said Chiarelli. “The 4th Infantry Division, the Multi-National Division - Baghdad, we have become brothers in arms.”

The 4th Inf. Div. commander said he was looking back on a year’s worth of accomplishments.

“Since Jan. 7, the Soldiers, standing side by side with the Iraqi Security Forces, have courageously fought the terrorists in the streets of Baghdad, Babil, Karbala and Najaf.

“Our combined efforts enabled us to begin leading the Iraqi people.”

With the colors of his division, Chiarelli said his thoughts were focused on the effort.

“Our families and friends wait patiently and have supported us unconditionally.”

“We return to our homes and families with the colors of the Iraqi people,” he continued.

With the crisp notes of the 1st Cavalry Division march, the

## First Team Take









(Photo by Warrant Officer Richard Reed, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

## Up, Up and Away

An AH-64 Apache helicopter from the 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, takes off from Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq, to provide close air support for a mission being conducted by paratroopers in the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

## ‘Arctic Sunrise’ Helps Hawr Rajab People

By Capt. Randy Tester  
1-40th Cavalry, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Soldiers from 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and paratroopers of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted a six-day combined operation called ‘Arctic Sunrise’ the week of Nov. 30th in Hawr Rajab, located south of

the Iraqi capital. During the operation, Iraqi troops handed out more than 100 humanitarian assistance boxes, consisting of bread, rice, and water. Local Iraqis welcomed the food packages. Many who live in Hawr Rajab work in Baghdad, where recent curfews prevented many of them from purchasing food for their families. Iraqi security forces and Spartan paratroopers worked together this week to help the people of the area.



Soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division distribute food packages to citizens of Hawr Rajab the week of Nov. 30.



(Photos by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assist citizens of Hawr Rajab with food packages. The Soldiers conducted a six-day joint humanitarian mission called “Arctic Sunrise.”



# When I Grow Up, I Want To Be a Soldier

By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – As a young boy holds his mothers hand, the two watch as a UH-1 ‘Huey’ Helicopter lands in the distance with its blades spinning, stirring dust like a scene from an old World War II movie.

The boy’s eyes fill with wonder as he watches camouflaged figures exit from its doors, seeming to him, in slow motion.

Even though these camouflaged figures were normal men, to this child they seemed like the Titans of Ancient Greece.

Tall, strong and god-like these men walked across the landing zone against the setting sun. The young boy stared in awe as they faded into the golden light until they were completely out of his sight.

At that moment, Sgt. Aubrey Jollotta, then 5-years-old, knew that he wanted to join the Army.

Growing up in Calais, Maine, Jollotta didn’t have luxuries like so many other children.

“I had a really ruff childhood,” said Jollotta. “My family didn’t have much of anything but each other. I guess when it comes down to it, that’s all that I needed.”

Being fourth generation Army, he had a decision to make after he completed high school in which direction he wanted his life to go.

Jollotta joined the civilian work force until he decided to go to college.

“My family was all for me joining the Army,” said Jollotta. “But I had to make sure it was the right choice for me.”

After completing a semester of college, he decided to make the move and enlist in the United States Army at 22 years old.

From then on, Jollotta has not looked back.

During his six years in the Army, Jollotta has been deployed four times – three with the 82nd Airborne Division. His most recent deployment is with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Airborne).

As far as making the Army a career Jollotta has not completely decided on that yet. His chance to reenlist opens up in April 2007.

Jollotta’s military lineage dates back too WWII in which his great uncle and grandfather served.

Now during this deployment to Iraq, Jollotta is serving a M2 .50 caliber machine gunner as part of the tactical alternate command team for the command element of the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment (Airborne).

On the TAC, Jollotta works closely with a team that consists of at least four tactical vehicles with five person-



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Aubrey Jollotta, an M2 .50 caliber gunner for the command element tactical alternate command team from the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (Airborne), scans the area for any possible threats during a mounted patrol in a town south of Baghdad.**

nel in each. Within his vehicle, the driver, Pfc. Albert Fambrough, speaks nothing but praises about Jollotta.

“Sgt. Jollotta is a great person to work with,” said Fambrough. “He is a prime example for a good role model.”

Fambrough has been in the Army for a little over 18 months and has worked with Jollotta for approximately six months.

“He has been on several deployments and he knows what he is doing when we are out on mission, so I have a lot that I can learn from him. He looks out for me in every way a noncommissioned officer can,” Fambrough added.

Even people who do not ride with Jollotta can attest to the praises of his crew member Fambrough.

Pfc. David Lowry, who is also on the TAC team, does not work directly for Jollotta, but agrees that he is an out-

standing person and paratrooper.

“He is the kind of sergeant that emulates the Army values and standards,” said Lowry. “Especially the three core standards from the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment for Forward Operating Base Falcon leadership standards and discipline,” added Lowry.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, great uncle, uncle and father, Jollotta is well on his way to making his own legacy.

“A man must stay in his own orbit and take his direc- tives from within. If through fear of loneliness, intimidat- ion, or suggestion, he joins the marching groups of his time, he will not reach his best,” from the Notebooks of Paul Brunton.

For Jollotta, reaching his best will not be a problem, what to do once it is surpassed will be the question for him.



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler), 4th BCT (ABN), 25th Inf. Div.)

## Walking on the Wild Side

**A paratrooper from the 4th Brigade Combat Team , 25th Infantry Division, makes his way through a field of over growth in Iraq, during an escort mission for this brigade commander, Col. Michael Garrett, south of Baghdad.**



Life-Line for Brigade

Airborne Logisticians Deliver the Goods

By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Occupying vast areas in southern Iraq, the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division’s mission success relies heavily on the logistical supply lines between the different areas of operation and dependability of the support battalion delivering the supplies.

Paratroopers from Company A, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, did its part of keeping the mission life-line going by conducting a combat logistical convoy, delivering a resupply of fuel, mail, weapon mounts, surveillance equipment and escorting food trailers from FOB Kalsu to FOB Iskan Nov. 18.

“Our mission was to deliver much needed supplies safely to our brother battalion at Iskan,” said 1st Lt. William Myrick, convoy commander for this mission. “The mission ran very smoothly and was an overall success.”

Thanks in part to the situational awareness of everyone in the convoy, Myrick said, the mission went without any hitches or problems.

“Every set of eyes that we have on the road makes it that much easier for each and every paratrooper to return back safely,” said Myrick. With children waving at the paratroopers as their vehicles passed by, the combat convoy experience is some-



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment Command Sgt. Maj. Norman Corbett walks back towards his vehicle before a 155mm artillery round is detonated by an explosive ordnance team. The unexploded ordnance was discovered during a dismounted patrol.

thing Spc. Jeremy Kozub will remember for a long time.

A first timer for conducting a combat convoy, Kozub served as a team chief for

one of the vehicles in the convoy.

“The experience opened my eyes to how truly blessed we are to be Americans,” he said. “Even with the immi-

nent dangers that we face every time we leave the walls of our (forward operating base), it is worth it to help the people of Iraq.”



(Photo by Sgt. J.H. French, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Flying the Friendly Skies

A Soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division provides security as a helicopter loaded with paratroopers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division flies over a downtown Baghdad power plant.



# Brothers reunite in Baghdad for Thanksgiving

By Sgt. J.H. French  
4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

KALSU, Iraq – Thanksgiving is a time to reflect, remember and give thanks for the blessings in life.

Out of all the things Staff Sgt. Corey Antley, a communications and network administrator with A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division is thankful for, being in Iraq at first seems the most unlikely.

However, Antley is in Iraq fighting along side his two older brothers.

Tyrone Antley has been deployed for the last 16th months. Corey Antley and Lorenzo Antley are just beginning their second tours here in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Lorenzo Antley, the oldest brother, is an intelligence analyst in the 1st Cavalry Division and Staff Sgt. Tyrone Antley, the middle brother, is an infantryman with the 172nd Stryker Brigade.

“It is almost overwhelming,” said Lorenzo Antley. “Getting to see both of my brothers here after such a long time is all such a surprise.”

The last time the brothers were all together was during a chance meeting at home in Orangeburg, S.C., nearly seven years ago.

Corey was home on leave and Tyrone was there while changing duty stations. When Lorenzo heard his brothers were home he drove in from Ft. Gordon to visit.

“The last time we were all together was in May of 2000,” said Corey Antley. “It was just a chance occasion. Once the three of us were home, the whole family started showing up. We had the whole family there, even our cousins from Baltimore and New York came in.”

The chance occasion turned into an impromptu family reunion, complete with food, drinks and fun.

“We had a huge cook-out and were grilling steaks and chicken. It was a great time,” he continued. “We were sneaking and having a few beers behind mom’s back. She would still kick out butts if she caught us. It was the best time I can ever remember having.”

This family reunion was in a little different setting. The brothers traded their family farm in South Carolina for a palace in Baghdad, Iraq and their own pond for a lake complete with palaces and chalets that once belonged to Saddam Hussein. The beer was still around but in non-alcoholic variety and the rest of the family was there via telephone.

“How’s the war coming along?” asked the brothers’ father, Joseph, when he answered their phone call.

Their father is a retired Vietnam Veteran who urged his sons to go to college and stay out of the military.

“He raised us to be strong, confident young men,” said Corey Antley. “I think all of us want to be half the man he is.”

“He always told us to stay out of the military and def-



(Photos by Sgt. J. H. French, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Staff Sgts. Lorenzo, Tyrone and Corey Antley catch up on old times at an impromptu family reunion in Baghdad for a few days around Thanksgiving in Iraq. Lorenzo, the oldest brother, is an intelligence analyst in the 1st Cavalry Division and Tyrone, the middle brother, is an infantryman with the 172nd Stryker Brigade. Corey is a communications and network administrator with A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.**

initely stay out of the infantry. One by one we all joined and Tyrone even joined as a grunt. Dad would just shake his head but he always had little smile that showed he was proud.”

Their mother, Gladys, was so excited she nearly cried on the phone when it was her turn to talk.

“I wish you were here with me but I understand why you can’t be so I’m just happy you are together,” she said. “It puts my mind at ease knowing you’re with each other.”

Mrs. Antley has had to worry about her sons being deployed before, but this is the first time that the three of them have deployed at the same time.

“Our mom definitely has a strong backbone,” said Tyrone Antley. “She worries a lot and prays for us a lot more.”

“Hearing our voices on the phone and knowing we were together for Thanksgiving gave our mom a huge sigh of relief,” said Corey Antley. “It was the first good night of sleep she has had since we got here. She is constantly worried about her boys. It meant everything to her that we could be together.”

Even though the brothers couldn’t be with their mother, father, wives and children on Thanksgiving it was special to them all the same.

“We are right where we should be this year,” said Lorenzo Antley. “I get to spend Thanksgiving with my family, my little brothers and that makes it special.”

“It is a great story we can all tell our grand kids one day,” continued Tyrone Antley.

Even though the brothers were all in Iraq together the Baghdad reunion wouldn’t have happened if it hadn’t been for the efforts of Corey.

“I started thinking that it might be possible back in Alaska. Tyrone thinks Alaska is the best thing since sliced bread and that is why I wanted to get stationed there. We were supposed to go king salmon fishing when he got home but he ended up getting extended,” he said. “I think it bothered me more than it did him. I knew exactly where he was and what he was out doing. That was when I started thinking about getting the three of us together.”

Corey and Lorenzo arrived in Kuwait at the same time on the same day so the youngest of the brothers was given renewed hope of setting the reunion up.

“We had just arrived at the airport when someone told me he had just ran into another staff sergeant Antley,” Corey said. “I knew exactly where to look for him. After that many hours on an airplane I knew he would be in the smoking area.”

“After we saw each other at the airport he was determined to track me down again,” said Lorenzo. “At Camp Buehring he must have walk about four miles in the middle of the night to find out where I was staying. That was when we started talking about the possibility of all of us

getting together.”

Once the two brothers arrived in Iraq, Corey made a few phone calls, talked to the right people and the reunion was arranged, but was still a challenge to make happen.

Tyrone arrived at Camp Liberty with his body armor peppered with shrapnel from an improvised explosive device that hit his truck on the way to meet his brothers.

The next day, Corey flew in to Baghdad from Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

“I was like a kid at Christmas time,” said Corey. “I couldn’t sleep at all the night before. I was wondering how they had changed. I wondered how they would look and if Lorenzo had gotten fat.”

In fact, the brothers hadn’t changed that much at all.

Lorenzo did have a little gut going and Tyrone had some gray hair but other than that it was just like old times, he continued. They were even picking on me like we were kids again.

Having Lorenzo and Tyrone as big brothers, Corey began his training to be a paratrooper at a young age.

They used to launch me off of teeter-totters and push me out of trees all the time. Needless to say, I spent a lot of time at the emergency room, said Corey.

“I think the fact that I am Airborne saved me from a lot of their jokes,” he continued. “Tyrone and I were actually picking on Lorenzo. We were calling him soft and asking him how many pizzas he has had delivered to his room since he has been here.”

All of their jokes aside, the brothers were thankful to be together on Thanksgiving.

“Being here together just shows what a great Army this is,” said Tyrone. “It brought three brothers together from all over this country just so we could spend the day together. I leave in less than a week and it is great to see them before I go. It really sends me home on a high note.”

Seeing Tyrone finally get to head home to his family makes this Thanksgiving even more special for his younger brother.

“This get together was a little more low key than the last time but it has been just as exciting,” said Corey. “Now that we have finally gotten to see each other I can’t wait for Tyrone to finally get out of here. He needs to get back home to his wife and kids.”

For the last 16 months the family has worried about Tyrone, now it is his turn, said Lorenzo.

“I know that he will be praying for us. I know that the whole family will be,” Corey continued. “For that I am thankful.”

“I keep God and my family close to my heart. It is the only thing in the world that is constant,” Corey said. “My father and brothers give me an example to live by and live up too. My wife and child keep me grounded and for that I am thankful.”



**Staff Sgt. Corey Antley, communications and network administrator with A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, begins looking for his brother’s room after arriving on Camp Liberty in Baghdad for a reunion with his two older brothers around Thanksgiving.**



## Twins Find Similarities in Life, Rotations

By Pfc. M. Benjamin Gable  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The chance of running into your brother halfway around the world is slim. Taking over his job duties so he can redeploy home, increases those odds astronomically. The common denominator is these brothers are twins, and have shared many of the same interests all their life.

Both Sgt. Jeremy Tate, a tanker with Headquarters Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and the younger twin-brother, by one minute, Cpl. Johnathan Tate, a tanker with Headquarters Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, have served together in Iraq once before; however, this deployment the younger Tate will relieve his older sibling, of his duties so he may return to Ft. Hood, Texas, for a well deserved rest.

Sharing duty stations is not the only connection these twins share.

Jeremy and Johnathan are natives of Calhoun, Ga., and were taught at an early age from their father, Jerry, how to repair cars and make those cars their own.

“We began working with cars after watching our father work on them when we were little and picked it up from him,” Jeremy said.

After learning the basics these twins took matters into their hands and made ready their own rides for the streets of northern Georgia. Jeremy purchased a black 1989 Camaro while Johnathan went with a white 1991 Firebird.

“Jeremy’s car couldn’t hang with mine, I would win for sure,” Johnathan proclaimed.

Racing results not withstanding, these twins agree on most everything else. Upon arriving here, Jeremy allotted

his personal effects to his younger brother, including a refrigerator, an I-pod with many of their favorite songs and his personal collection of digital video discs.

The two also agree on favorite pastimes. Both enjoy fishing, hunting and barbecuing when home with their families.

Serving their country together is another likeness these twins share.

After graduating from Gordon Central High School in the summer of 2000, Jeremy and Johnathan decided to join the United States Army, together. After they swore in and attended basic training together, they were both stationed at Ft. Hood in the 4th Infantry Division; same unit, same company. They then deployed with one another to Somarra, Iraq, for seven months.

“We didn’t get to room together but we leaned on each other and it really helped us through the deployment,” Johnathan said.

The two worked together in control rooms and patrolled streets numerous times next to each other.

This time around, Jeremy, with the outgoing 4th Infantry Division and Johnathan with the incoming 1st Cavalry Division, will spend only a short amount of time together before Sgt. Tate redeploy home.

Johnathan arrived two weeks ago and immediately sought out his older brother. Not only to spend quality time with him, but also because he is taking over his position in the control room where they keep constant radio contact with patrolling troops.

Jeremy is awaiting a departure date to return home and spend time with his family while Johnathan is beginning his second deployment. The pair are enjoying the time they have to spend together while here, and upon Johnathan return home for mid-tour leave they plan on celebrating their reunion with a Texas-sized barbecue.



(Photo by Pfc. M. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Sgt. Jeremy Tate (left), a tanker with Headquarters Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and the younger twin-brother, by one minute, Cpl. Johnathan Tate (right), a tanker with Headquarters Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stand together in front of an up-armor humvee at Camp Liberty, Iraq, Nov. 27.**

## Soldiers Help Iraqi Children Through Support of Americans

By Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie  
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

RADWANIYAH, Iraq – Jasmine, an Iraqi child with un-kept hair and dressed in tattered clothes, reached her hand out for a pair of shoes. She was not concerned with the brand, style or even the size of the shoes. She simply wanted a pair of shoes to replace the sandals she was wearing – sandals which were too small, causing her toes to touch the pavement when she walked.

Providing needed items such as this was a highlight for Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, who assisted in handing out any-

thing from shoes to shampoo to Iraqi children like Jasmine at the Civil Military Operations Center in Radwaniyah, south-east of Baghdad.

“I wanted to be able to do something nice to help the community and show the Iraqis we are here to help them,” said Michelle Winicki, a medic with the 210th BSB.

The items the Soldiers passed out to the children came from the support of the American people in the form of a ‘Victory Box,’ filled with items to give to the Iraqis.

The Victory Boxes were started by Mary Halleck, of Colleyville, Texas. Halleck originally started sending boxes to Soldiers who had no families to send them anything. After sending numerous care packages to Soldiers, Halleck received a

letter from a Soldier asking her if she would be able to send school supplies to the Iraqi children.

After a few fund-raisers, Halleck and her friends came up with the idea of Victory Boxes – boxes containing goods needed for the Iraqi people to help them in their fight for freedom.

“I’ve never really done anything for my country,” Halleck said. “I envisioned our (American) families sending boxes to the people of Iraq through the Soldiers.”

The boxes were intended to help the Iraqis as they train to defend their country, get their economy going, clothe their families and educate their children.

“The support (that the Iraqi people are receiving) is great,” said Sgt. Billie Caperton, a medic with 210th BSB. “It

feels like the Iraqis want us here, and it feels good that the American people understand they (the Iraqi people) are in a tough situation and want to help the Iraqis.”

Unlike the majority of children who ask for the latest video game, name-brand clothes or a new toy, the Iraqi children ask for basic necessities that most take for granted – items like shampoo, shoes, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Most of the children asking for the items have never had the money to buy products to wash their hair or brush their teeth. For them, these items are special.

The simple act of giving the Iraqi children basic items has led to the discovery of dangerous weapons and improvised-explosive devices. Sometimes when the Iraqi children recognize Soldiers who have helped them, they show the Soldiers where such dangerous weapons are located.

“Giving the children items they need helps them get over the fear of people (Soldiers) in uniform,” said Capt. Mark Griffin, a civil affairs officer, who operates with the 2nd BCT, a native of San Antonio. “It shows them that people in uniform are not bad.”

With the help of people like Halleck, Soldiers are able to help the Iraqi people.

“This is a great program because there is such a huge need for supplies in Iraq,” Griffin said. “When the American people get involved, it helps us push products out and give the Iraqi people a better shot at standing up their country. They are given the things they need to survive.”

Currently, the 2nd BCT Soldiers are helping get these special boxes out to the Iraqi people. Overall, there have been approximately 5,000 boxes sent to Soldiers.

“These boxes are from the American people to the Iraqi people through the Soldiers,” Halleck added.

Now, with the support of the American people, Iraqi children like Jasmine will be able to wear a pair of shoes that fit, wash their hair and brush their teeth.

For more information about Victory Boxes log on to [www.victoryboxes.com](http://www.victoryboxes.com).



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Billie Caperton (left), a medic with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, hands an Iraqi child a toy during a visit to the Civil Military Operations Center in Radwaniyah, southeast of Baghdad. The items given to children were sent from American citizens in the form of victory boxes – boxes that contain basic supplies to help the Iraqi children.**



# Soldiers Find Comfort in “Lucky Charms”

By Pfc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Before heading into Baghdad, Soldiers here put on layer after layer of protective gear. There’s the Army Combat Uniform first, then an Outer Tactical Vest and, finally, they top it off with an Army Combat Helmet.

All of that is great for physical safety, but sometimes it takes digging a little deeper under the uniform to see what really makes Soldiers feel at ease.

It’s in the depths of their pockets where you find a Soldier’s “lucky charm,” the item that makes them smile, reminds them of home and never leaves their side.

“Twinkie the Kid” is a trinket for children to carry their Twinkies to school for lunch. That was until Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow, the 1st Cavalry Division’s senior noncommissioned officer, got one.

Now, it’s his lucky charm.

“My wife sent me Twinkie the Kid during Operation Iraqi Freedom I as a joke, and it hasn’t left my side since,” the Townsend, Mont., native said.

Twinkie the Kid has developed many Cav-like characteristics since spending so much time with him. He even got a new name – “Cav Kid.”

The Cav Kid blends in with the rest of his Cav battle buddies. His apparel includes a Stetson and cowboy boots.

“The Stetson isn’t authorized in theater ... yet, but we let it slide for the Cav Kid,” Johndrow said.

After three deployments and many missions all over Iraq the Cav Kid has definitely earned his spurs, Johndrow said. He has battle scrapes to prove it and he even has his own place in Johndrow’s humvee.

The Cav Kid doesn’t leave the wire without protection, though. He has a small plastic gun that he carries for effect.

“He (the Cav Kid) is more than just a lucky charm. He is my wingman,” said Johndrow.

The toy also serves as a sentimental reminder to Johndrow of his wife, Vickie, back home. He said makes him smile

when he looks at it. It also helps keep him connected back home.

“I send my wife pictures of The Cav Kid and I, and it makes her smile,” he said. Johndrow said his wife even went and purchased a “Ms. Cav the Kid.” She sends pictures of the adventures they go on together. Having a little token of home helps the division’s top NCO get through each day.

“No matter how bad your day is you can look at The Cav Kid, and he’s always smiling,” Johndrow said. “You can’t help but smile, too.”

The First Team’s command sergeant major isn’t alone when it comes to carrying tokens from home.

For Staff Sgt. Brian Grinshaw, it’s a golden wedding ring that fits tightly around his right ring finger that brings him comfort.

“My dad gave it to me when I was 21. I promised to never take it off and I haven’t,” said Grinshaw, an Oklahoma City native with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division. “It was my dad’s wedding ring from when he was married to my mom.”

The ring has traveled with Grinshaw to Kosovo and now to Iraq for a second time.

“I plan on passing this ring on to my son to keep the tradition alive,” he said.

For Capt. Elizabeth Witowski, a Pittsburgh native also from HHC, 1st Cav. Div., a Saint Christopher medal that once belonged to her great grandmother is her good luck charm. She keeps it tucked away in an ear plug case connected to her protective vest.

She said her father gave it to her for luck on her first deployment and she has kept it with her ever since.

“It seems once something gets you through one deployment you have to bring it on the next,” she said.

If you look deep in the pockets of Lt. Col. Eric Winkie, HHC, 1st Cav. Div., you will find a crucifix blessed by a chaplain during Desert Storm.

“All of my kids have touched it and I don’t leave home without it,” he said.

The crucifix has traveled with him



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow, the senior noncommissioned officer for the Multi-National Division – Baghdad and 1st Cavalry Division, shows off his lucky charm, the “Cav Kid” outside the division headquarters Nov. 15.**

through Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Kuwait and now back to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Whether it be religious, sentimental or

superstitious, many troops carry some sort of “lucky charm” that helps get them through the day, or brings back memories of a home thousands of miles away.

## The Inseparable, Now Separated

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Everyone misses their family, when separated because of a deployment, but for one 1st Cavalry Division Soldier leaving home was a little more difficult than most.

From the first spark of life in Shreveport, La., they were together. They came into the world together. They wore the same clothes through middle school, and dress alike as adults, having joined the Army together.

But for the first time in 22 years, Spc. Latasha Gates is not within walking distance of her twin sister Natasha.

“It’s hard sometimes,” she said. “I am used to just turning my head to tell her something. Now, I have to call, and it isn’t quite the same.”

She laughed as she spoke about their secret language, which wasn’t anything crazy like clicks and made-up words.

“I can tell what she is thinking just from a look on her face,” she said.

The Gates have been a tight-knit family from the start. If fact, they joined the Army to help support their mom.

“This way, we don’t have to worry,” Latasha said. “If she needs something we can help.”

The Gates twins lived together at Fort Hood and through their first tour in Iraq working as division automation specialists fixing

problems with networks, computers, faxes, and printers.

They lived, worked and hung out with each other.

For many siblings, that would have been a disaster.

“We’ve always been really close,” Latasha said. “Sure, we have our fights, but they usually resolve quickly. Nobody has ever moved out.”

But with the news a little over a year ago that Natasha was expecting a little girl, they know that their rhythms would change with the First Team’s deployment.

At first, Latasha didn’t want to leave, especially knowing that she couldn’t help her sister with the new addition to their family. But she knows she will see her twin again soon and is excited to start receiving pictures as her niece grows.

She is looking forward to growing herself with this new independence.

“I am hoping to get as much college finished as possible and to get my E-5 (promotion) in December,” she said.

The twins are planning to continue to live their lives side-by-side and consider each other in their decisions. So far, the plan is to get out of the Army in about a year and a half, return to their hometown and finish college.

Though their future plans may change, one thing is for sure: they may physically get separated, their hearts will always be together.



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

## Forever in Love... With the Army

**Standing side-by-side during a ceremony, a husband and wife from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, raised their right hands and re-enlisted at Forward Operating Base Warhorse Nov. 6. Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Rivera, Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, and Staff Sgt. Leticia Rivera, Distribution Company A, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, re-enlisted together as a sign of support for each other.**

**“This means she will be there for me and I will be there for her,” said Rodney, a native of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. “So few people get to do that – re-enlist with your wife in a combat zone,” he added.**

**Without her husband’s support, Leticia, a native of Indio, Calif., said she would have not have re-enlisted.**

**“If he wouldn’t have been here with me, I would have gotten out,” she said.**





(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. Eric Still belts it out with Spc. Mitchell Vandenburg, and Sgt. Juan Rosaly backing him up during a performance at Camp Liberty, Iraq. The ensemble from the 1st Cavalry Division Band band is an ensemble that plays different genres of music for Soldiers all over Iraq.

# Cav Band Rockin’ Out for Troops

By Pfc. William Hatton  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Do the words rock ‘n’ roll, country music, or rhythm and blues cross your mind when you think of a military band?

The 1st Cavalry Division Band plays it all. Amber Tight, the 1st Cavalry Division’s band, is a group of Soldiers with different talents and musical backgrounds whose mission is to boost morale and help Soldiers feel a little more at home, said Sgt. Eric Still, a guitar player.

“Our band is unique in that there are so many different styles coming together,” said Still, a native of Pattysburg, Miss. “Everyone has different musical back-

grounds, and we just try to blend it all together to sound good.” The band performs at different forward operating bases and dining facilities trying to give Soldiers a piece of home, said Spc. Mitchell Vandenburg, a bass player in the band.

“Because we’re so versatile we are able to affect anyone in the crowd, whether they like rock, country or R&B,” said Sgt. Nicole Headlee, a vocalist in the band, from Waynesburg, Pa.

The ability to affect all types through their instruments and vocals encourages the band to keep playing for the troops knowing they are making a difference.

“Being able to see other people get into our music and get a break from what they do is something I enjoy seeing every time we play,” said Vandenburg, a native of Loveland, Colo. “I feel that our playing helps lighten the mental load that comes with being a Soldier.”

Performing in college was a lot different than what band members are doing now, said Sgt. Jeff Munoz, the drummer for the band. In college it was all about grades, but in the Cavalry band it’s more about trying to do something for the Soldiers, he added.


“When I played in a band before joining the army, the

music was all about me, or all about what I was trying to convey,” Still said. However, being deployed to perform for the Soldiers of the 1st Cav. Div. makes performing feel more meaningful, he added.


One of the coolest things Still experienced, were Soldiers coming back from an especially difficult mission in Sadr City. The combat-weary Soldiers watched the band rock out, then rolled right back into the fight. Performing the show was gratifying for the band because it took the Soldier’s minds out of combat, even if it was for a moment. In a war zone, every little reminder of home helps Soldiers cope with everyday stress, he explained.

“I’ve had soldiers come up to me and tell me how much they liked our music,” said Sgt. Dan Coursen, a vocalist in the band, from Tustin, Calif. “It wasn’t until I heard and saw people’s reaction to our performance that I thought how important it was to play.”


When the band jams for Soldiers, it’s like adding salt and pepper to food to make it taste better, said Sgt. Juan Rosaly, a guitarist in the band, from Ponce, Puerto Rico. One song at a time, the band aspires to help Soldiers feel like they’re not so far from home.



**OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



If stupidity doesn't kill you,  
It will surely make you sweat!

BE SAFE, MAKE IT HOME



(Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

## Laughing With Titus

Soldiers of the 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, enjoy the comedy show featuring Christopher Titus and Jennie McNulty, comedians and actors with the United Service Organizations tour, at Sallie Gym on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Nov. 18.



# Cash Card Saves Time, Money

By Pfc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs  
Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Does your roommate have sticky fingers? Are you tired of loosing your cash on all those high-speed missions you go on? Then the Eagle Cash Card is what you need.

The Eagle Cash Card is a device to help Soldiers who are deployed to Kuwait and Iraq. It is meant to prevent Soldiers from loosing their cash, getting their cash stolen and aids Soldiers to save more and spend less.

It is a card directly linked to the cardholder's bank account and enables Soldiers to transfer funds from their checking account to their ECC. The ECC can be used in theater at any Army Air Force Exchange Services vendor.

There are also a number of ECC kiosks here in Iraq, said Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Pettit, the top non-commissioned officer with the 15th Finance Battalion.

"Right now, there are 30 kiosks in Iraq," Pettit said. "In the Victory Base Complex alone, there are 10 active kiosks. In the spring, Soldiers can expect approximately 35-40 additional kiosks operating throughout Iraq."

It also is safe.

"No one can access your funds without your pin number and your card," said Sgt 1st Class Jose Rivera, 15th Finance Battalion.

"If you misplace your card or it gets stolen you can go to the finance office and report it," Pettit added. "We will transfer your funds to a new card so you won't be out of any



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Spc. Charlie Henriquez, a native of Passaic, N.J., with Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, transfers money to his Eagle Cash Card so he can buy some essentials from the Camp Liberty Post Exchange Nov. 22.**

money."

Not only is the card safer, but there is simply not many other ways to pay for things while deployed. Soldiers don't have access to automated teller machines, and most major credit cards charge an inflated, overseas interest rate. There are no fees or interest with the ECC, Rivera said. Even transactions between Soldiers can be done using an ECC.

"You can transfer funds from your card to another Soldiers card if you go to the kiosk at the same time," Pettit said.

Pettit said one question she hears often from Soldiers is what happens to their money on the cash cards once they depart Iraq. There are ECC kiosks on Fort Hood, but the money on the card will be returned to your bank account after the expiration date

of the card. "The ECC cards are configured to expire 13 months after activation," Pettit said. "If a Soldier does not unload their card during redeployment and gets back to home station with money on the card, they can call the ECC hotline to get their remaining funds deposited back into their bank account."

Cash cards are available at your finance office. All you need to bring is your account number and routing number unless your using the account your pay goes to.

"It's quick, easy and you don't have to wait in a long line for a casual pay," Rivera said.

The ECC hotline is: DSN – 312-.955-.3555, or toll free (commercial) – (877) .973-8982. Soldiers can also e-mail the ECC hotline at eagle@bos.frb.org.

## Special Pay Given for a Tough Job

By Pfc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Loot. Benjamins. Wampum. Greenbacks. Cold, hard cash. It doesn't matter what you call it. What matters, is if you are getting enough of it.

Soldiers here owe it to themselves and their loved ones to know exactly how much they should be getting paid while deployed in Iraq.

A large portion of Soldier's pay increase while in the-



(Photo by Pfc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Spc. Julio Larregui, from 413th Finance Detachment, a reserve unit from Puerto Rico supporting Multi-National Division - Baghdad, helps a Soldier with his finances questions at Camp Liberty, Iraq.**

ater comes from hostile fire pay. Hostile fire pay is specified at a rate of \$225 per month for all Soldiers deployed in places of imminent danger, said 1st Lt. Alok Chanani, commander, 413th Finance Detachment, a reserve unit from Puerto Rico supporting the Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"Hostile fire pay is not prorated. If you spend one day in theater you should receive the entire monthly pay," added Sgt. 1st Class Jose Rivera, the detachment's non-commissioned officer in charge.

Hostile fire pay is not to be confused with hardship duty pay. Hardship duty pay is intended to compensate for undue adversity that Soldier's face, and is received by all Soldiers deployed in a combat zone.

"Hardship duty pay is \$100 a month but it is prorated. If you come to theater on Nov. 15 then you will only receive \$50 for that month," Chanani explained.

Something else to look for on your leave and earnings statement is Basic Allowance for Subsistence. BAS starts the day you leave your home station and ends the day you return. Enlisted Soldiers receive \$272.26 a month and officers receive \$187.49 a month.

All Soldiers need to make sure that no meal reductions show up on their LES during their deployment. Soldiers do not have to pay for meals down range, but they do give up the meal portion of per diem.

For the most part, single and married Soldiers receive the same pay while deployed with the exception of family separation pay.

Married Soldiers get family \$8.33 a day, to compensate for forced separation from their dependents, starting from the day they leave their home station to the day they return, Rivera explained.

All Soldiers have a chance to cash in when they return from Iraq. Per diem is a travel allowance to cover expenses while traveling.

When Soldiers return to their home duty station they need to turn in travel vouchers to their supporting finance office to receive this per diem payment. Over the course of a year, that \$3.50 per day can add up, Chanani said.

Soldiers having any pay problems are encouraged to see their supporting finance office.

## Saving Funds From Fraudulent Friends

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Many Soldiers use powers of attorney, given to a spouse, relative or close friend, to help them take care of issues that may arise during their year-long deployment to the Middle East.

While special powers of attorney are available, many troops grant general power of attorney to their designated representative back home.

Though it is the exception, not the norm, some troops are finding their pay, allowances and bonus money evaporate into thin air due to abuse by the person granted the power of attorney.

"More than \$68,000 has been taken from Soldiers from abuse of powers of attorney (since the 1st Cavalry Division assumed control of MND-B)," said Capt. Robert Michaels, a legal assistance attorney with the Multi-National Division – Baghdad's Staff Judge Advocate office here.

He said there are risks involved with giving someone else control of your finances.

"What you've done, with a general power of attorney, is you're allowing that person to be 'you' for a year, or however long the power of attorney lasts," said the Athens, Pa., native.

### Identifying a problem

Michaels said if a Soldier discovers a problem with their finances, they can take some steps to investigate and sometimes rectify the problem. He recommends troops make full use of on-line banking, if they have access to it, and to regularly check their bank account balances and to check their credit report, at least monthly, to see if lines of credit are being opened up without their knowledge. Issues with credit are easier to rectify than the loss of cash.

"You'll be able to see if some agency is investigating your credit," Michaels explained. "That will show up on your credit report."

### Fixing the problem

"A lot of Soldiers think there's nothing they can do about (power of attorney abuses)," Michaels said. "But if they see the problem early, there are steps we can take to fix it."

Soldiers can begin the revocation process of their power of attorney or the SJA staff will assist them to send out a fraud alert to creditors, if the abuse involves credit cards or unapproved loans.

"A fraud alert lets creditors know that someone has been using your name and your social security number to take out credit without your knowledge," Michaels explained.

The best way to revoke a power of attorney is to retrieve it and tear it up. Barring that, Michaels said there is another option for troops deployed.

"We will fill out revocation forms, which will be sent to the local courthouse," Michaels said. "The individual will also be notified, in writing, that the power of attorney has been revoked."

### Who's guilty of abuse?

"It's often spouses ... newly married couples who have the most problems with power of attorney abuses," Michaels noted, "but we've seen girl friends, boy friends and acquaintances of Soldiers do it, too."

Michaels said no abuse investigation is typical, but the impact of it can be huge if it goes undetected.

"Shortly after arriving here, there was a Soldier getting ready to return home," Michaels recounted. "The Soldier checked his bank account for the first time in quite awhile, expecting all his deployment cash to be in there only to find a negative balance."

### Now what?

With thousands of dollars already lost by deployed troops to abusive attorneys-in-fact, Michaels said minimizing the damage is possible by contacting credit agencies, or contacting businesses directly. Cash lost to power of attorney abuse is another matter.

"As far as cash goes, once it's gone, it's gone," Michaels said. "It's very difficult to get that back."

Trust is a key element between troops and their designated attorneys-in-fact, Michaels said. Keeping up steady communication with the holder of a power of attorney helps to maintain that trust, he added. Barring that, regular check-ups of their money is a prudent measure for every Soldier.

"Protect your money," Michaels advised, "especially newly reenlisted troops. Safeguard your bonuses. Big chunks of money can tempt a lot of people



# Cav Hosts Annual Fall Festival on Fort Hood

By Amanda Kim Stairrett  
Killeen Daily Herald

FORT HOOD - Nothing takes kids' minds off their parents' deployment like chucking a pumpkin 50 feet.

A homemade pumpkin catapult was just one of the features at Nov. 5's 1st Cavalry Division Fall Festival - an event to help keep spirits high during the first part of the deployment - which drew more than 1,500 of the First Team's family members.

It takes a while for families to hit their "deployment stride," the time when they get into a routine after their soldiers deploy, said Chrystal Garcia.

The division began deploying soldiers in August, the last of them leaving Wednesday.

Garcia is the Family Readiness Group adviser of the 1st Cavalry Division's Special Troops Battalion and wife of its commander, Lt. Col. Daniel Garcia.

The battalion sponsored the festival Saturday afternoon in the field next to the Horse Cavalry Detachment's stables.

The event was more than a success, Garcia said, and there were many happy children.

Besides the pumpkin contraption, the Fall Festival included free food, carnival-like games, a rock-climbing wall, petting zoo, hay rides, pumpkin-seed spitting contest, tours through the Horse Detachment's stables and a demonstration by the unit to families of First Team soldiers.

Representatives from the division's Public Affairs Office attended to take family portraits and a video of the event, which also will be sent to the deployed soldiers.

Spouses, children and other family members received a chance to sign a large white cloth for their brigades, which will be sent to Iraq to hang in each brigade's dining facility.

Christi Clayton and her son, 8-year-old Hunter, and her daughter 7-year-old Skyler, each wrote something for Sgt. Troy Clayton, an intelligence soldier in the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 1st Battalion, 227th Attack Aviation Regiment.

Clayton said she always supports the division and attended the festival because it was a way to get together with other families and keep the children entertained.

The event was created to build the morale of families and take their minds off



(Photos by David Morris, Killeen Daily Herald)  
**Twin sisters Breonna and Deonna McCarthy walk down their lane as they participate in the three- legged race Nov. 5 during the 1st Cavalry Division's Fall Fest at Fort Hood. Breonna and Deonna are the daughters of Sgt. Deo McCarthy of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.**

what is going on in the Middle East, Garcia said.

It was also important that the families know the division isn't just concentrating on the soldiers - leaders also are thinking about the families, said Elizabeth Cotton, a Family Readiness Group leader and wife of Lt. Col. Sylvester Cotton, a signal officer for the division.

It takes a while to get settled into a new schedule and form a supportive circle of friends, Garcia said, and the division wanted to do something before families entered their "deployment stride."

The Fall Festival helps to get the families of the division "out and about," said Col. Larry Phelps, the First Team rear detachment commander, who attended the event with one of his sons.

Stephanie Benson attended the festival to support the soldiers and bring her three daughters, 8-year-old Bethany, 3-year-old Alicia and 1-year-old Cayleigh.

Their dad, Spc. Marcus Benson, is in the 2nd Brigade's 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment. Alicia and

Cayleigh wore 1st Cavalry temporary tattoos on their cheeks that read, "My Daddy, My Hero."

Bethany was excited because she was able to reach the top of the rock-climbing wall and won \$1 from her mom.

Joseph and Norma McCulliss, enjoyed their time at the event and laughed as they watched their grandson pet and get nibbled on by a pony at the petting zoo.

The couple moved from Florida to the Fort Hood area for a year to be with their daughter, Capt. Claire McCulliss. Claire is eight months' pregnant and her husband will deploy soon.

They are both 1st Cavalry Division soldiers.

The event ended with the Horse Detachment's riding and tactics demonstration "in typical Cav fashion," Phelps said.

Phelps said he was pleased so many from the community attended the festival, and he saw everyone from age 1 month to 87 years old.



**Spc. Elizabeth Loftin runs with Victoria Wieman as they compete in the three-legged race Nov. 5 during the 1st Cavalry Division's Fall Fest.**

## Division's Rear Command Holds Town Hall Meeting

By Amanda Kim Stairrett  
Killeen Daily Herald

The best way to find out what is on the mind of military families is to ask them.

Rear Commander Col. Larry Phelps addressed more than 400 1st Cavalry Division family members Thursday evening during the rear command's second town hall meeting. The first was in mid-October.

During the division's monthly town hall meetings, family members get a chance to ask Phelps and his staff questions and have them answered on the spot.

The majority of questions Thursday focused on mail service to Iraq.

First Team Soldiers are in the process of transitioning from Kuwait to their bases in Iraq, where they will spend the next year.

That, coupled with the approaching holiday season, meant there were questions about the mail process, Phelps said.

One family member wanted to know how long it takes to get mail from Iraq. Phelps said everything depended on the location and facilities at each forward operating base, but the average was 11 to 17 days.

Others questions ranged from upcoming events for family members, which Phelps said would include a

big trip to watch the Houston Astros play; Army e-mail accounts; communication blackouts, which Phelps again said varied by unit and base; Web camera access in Iraq; and whether Soldiers are able to use their EagleCash Cards in Iraq.

A finance officer who was at the town hall meeting said the cards may be used throughout Iraq in six months.

Questions at the last meeting focused on deploying and where Soldiers were in that process.

Phelps and his staff answered every question, and if they didn't know the answer, assured the asker that it would be answered on the 1st Cavalry Web site at [www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv](http://www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv).

The Web site contains a page dedicated to rumor control and frequently asked questions.

The site gets about 50,000 hits a month, Phelps said. All the questions from the night's town hall meeting will be researched, answered and posted on the site within 72 hours, he added.

For topics that are not directly Army-related, such as questions about mail, the site provides links to resources like the U.S. Postal Service.

The goal in providing the families resources is to make them self-sufficient, Phelps said.

He said that it is a "huge gift" every time the staff

gets an opportunity to interact with families.

Events like the town hall meeting keep families from becoming islands because they can share the same feelings.

The event is more than a question-and-answer session, though.

Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow, the First Team's senior noncommissioned officer, gave families an update on their Soldiers during a taped session from Iraq; division volunteers were honored; and the crowd got the first showings of the *Hero Video* and episode of *Cav Country*.

Both are produced by the division's public affairs staff. Cav Country is a news program with stories about what the Soldiers are doing in Iraq, both on duty and off.

It is absolutely important for families to see the Soldiers doing their jobs, said Wendy Fil, wife of the division's commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr. The families can see the Soldiers living their everyday lives in Iraq, she said, and that brings them comfort.

Both programs can be watched on the First Team Web site.

The next 1st Cavalry Division town hall meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 13 at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center.





(Photos by Pfc. Jeffery Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

An infantryman with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Columbus, Ga., native Pfc. Andrew Williams waits for a fish to bite at 'Z Lake' on Camp Liberty, Iraq Nov. 1. Williams brought his own fishing gear with him on his first deployment away from home.

# Cav Trooper Fishing for an Escape

By Pfc. Jeffrey A. Ledesma  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - This is a war that Pfc. Andrew Williams enjoys fighting every chance he gets. It begins as he hooks one and ignites a tug-of-war battle for victory.

The battlefield is Camp Liberty's "Z Lake." The battle is fishing.

Williams, a member of Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, fishes in Baghdad to put his mind at ease during his first one-year deployment.

The infantryman said that since the age of four, he and his father spent countless hours fishing.

Today, casting a line and waiting for the fish to bite is a way for him to relax in the center of a war zone.

"(My father) taught that me being able to fish was great. He was like 'oh we didn't get to do all that nice, cozy stuff like that,'" Williams said.

The Columbus, Ga., native tries to fish as much as possible. On most days, he'll wake up early and fish until he has to head off to work. He said living at Camp Liberty with a lake snaking through it is a lot better situation than some of his friends serving elsewhere with the First Team in Baghdad.

"It's not that bad for us," Williams said. "I know it's rough for some of my friends. I've got friends in (3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment) and they're in a whole lot worse situation than we are. I've heard that they've already been in fire fights and a part of me wishes I was with them."

The new private barely saddled up with the First Team at the beginning of this year. He just put the biggest unit patch in the Army on his left shoulder before leaving for Iraq. Soon, he'll be wearing it on the right side.

Heading to a war zone as an infantryman set off two completely different reactions by his parents when the announcement of his deployment orders came out earlier this year.

"My mom was pretty upset about it, but my dad he was for the war before I joined the Army," Williams said, noting with pride that his father fought in Vietnam.

"He was alright with it, but my mom freaked out for a couple of days," he said.

Since he's been in country he has been able to talk to his parents; however that's about the only family he's been able to talk to so far.

"I've talked to both my parents several times," he said. "I tried calling my girl, but she's in college, so the hours that I can call she's in class. It's a little hard."

Although contacting his girlfriend is difficult, he said she does understand what it is like to deal with deployment issues. Her father was serving with the 82nd Airborne when he was hit by a sniper. Now, he's back home.

After her father's experience she had some concerns of her own.

"She knows stuff happens," he said. "The first thing she did after (her father's incident), she called me and (said) 'You're not going on patrols are you?'"

Williams assured her that he wasn't, which put her a little more at ease about his deployment.

Reassurances back home helps put loved ones at ease. A quiet dawn on the banks of Z Lake does the same for Williams.

"It's kind of hard because you got to figure out exactly what to do. These fish aren't like American fish - you just put a worm on a hook and they bite it - they're a little more, I guess, picky in their diet," he said.

"I've caught some stuff. I don't know the names of any of them. They look like, well everything looks like carp to



Pfc. Andrew Williams, an infantryman serving with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, feeds line through the fishing pole he brought from home before he attempts to catch some fish on "Z Lake" at Camp Liberty, Iraq Nov. 1.

me," he said. "But I was told there are bass in the lake."

A year separated from loved ones can be an ordeal. Williams said his coping strategy is to throw out a line and hope something bites.



# Soldiers Meet Top Golfers, Tee It Up

By Pfc. Ben Gable  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers gathered late Thanksgiving eve together with Professional Golfing Association Tour professionals and long drivers at the Scorpion Moral Welfare and Recreation Center here for a little holiday fun. These

professionals were on their game as they arrived to a rousing applause, much like entering the tee box on the first hole of a major, from a packed house of Soldiers eager to meet some of their favorite golfers.

Several of today's big hitters were in attendance including Cory Pavin, Frank Lickliter II, Donald Hammond, Jerome

Kelly, Brian Pavlet, Authur Sellinger and Howard Twitty.

Soldiers of all ranks and military occupational specialties lined up to get hats and golf balls, among other memorabilia autographed. The pros took the time to visit with each Soldier, posing for group photos and sharing golfing experiences with one another.

After the formal meetings and greetings, they took the microphone and the floor.

The pros asked Soldiers golf-related trivia questions and passed out t-shirts, calendars and a new driver. They then took the opportunity to praise the Soldiers for their service to their country and the sacrifices they make daily.

"We just wanted to let all the Soldiers know how much we care and [that] we support them," Pavin said.

The golfers weren't the only ones thankful for the visit.

"My dad and I are huge golf fans and it feels great these guys came all the way here for us," said Pvt. Cambron Gabriel, a Whittier, Calif., native and infantryman with 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Regiment, 4th Brigade

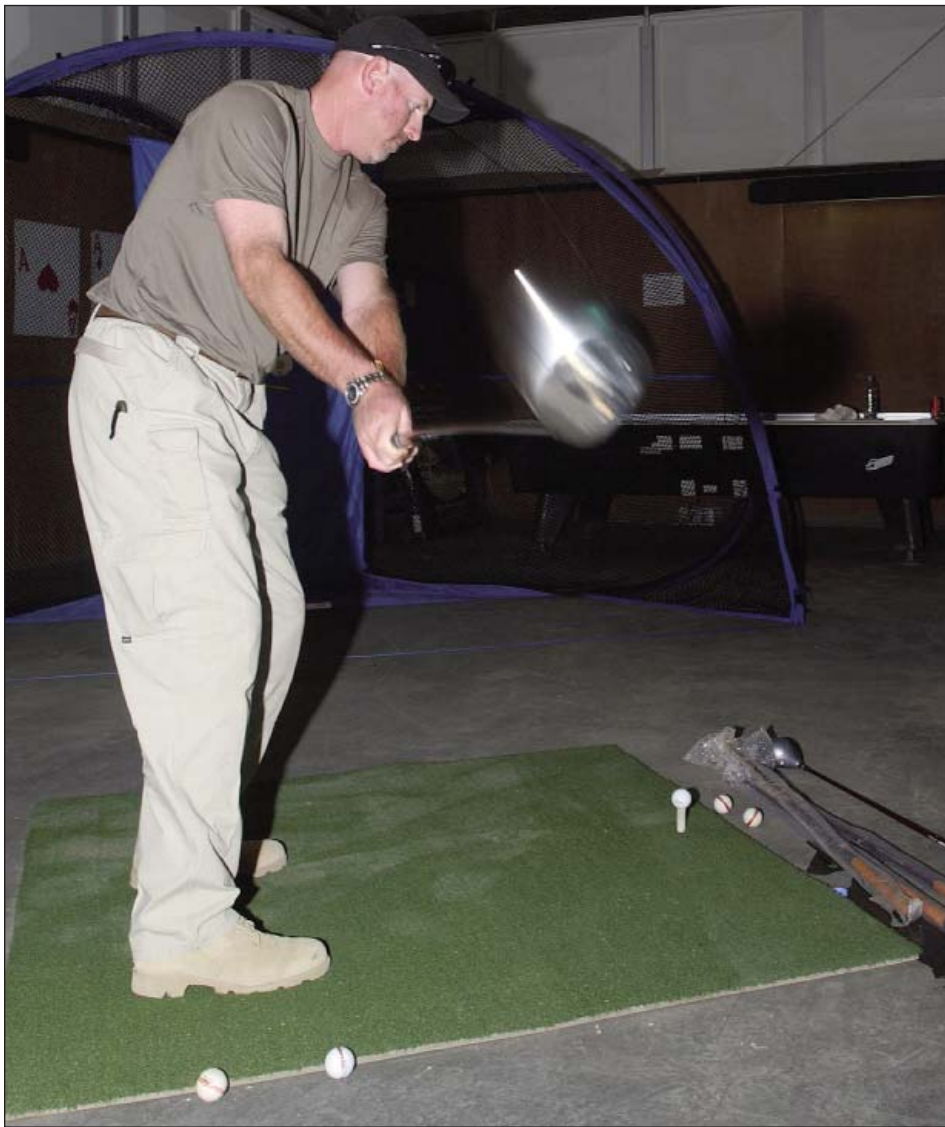
Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

All the attention turned next to the tour professionals showing their ball striking skills.

Not only showing their championship worthy driving skills, the pros proved that trick shots were simply routine. Tour professionals hit golf balls opposite handed, off 1 liter water bottles and even turned the driver upside down to hit a picture perfect drive.

The difference in professional and amateur golf was evident as a few Soldiers stepped up to the tee for their shot to impress the tour players. The first drive by a Soldier shot straight up and smacked the ceiling, missing the net laid out directly in front of him. The pros were quick to step in with a quick lesson and the next shot rang true, right at the target.

After the driving sessions, the event ended with Soldiers and pros alike gathering to offer thanks to one another and give seasons greetings. The PGA professionals will continue their tour of Iraq meeting with service members while the Soldiers in attendance will have new ammunition in the form of championship tips and tricks for the next time they hit the links.



(Photos by Pfc. Ben Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Frank Lickliter II, who has six top-10 finishes in his PGA career, demonstrates driving skills for Soldiers Nov. 23 in Baghdad.



Pvt. Cambron Gabriel, a Whittier, Calif., native and infantryman with 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, gets autographs from several golf professionals.

## Teams on Collision Course for Super Bowl?

In Green Bay, Wis., a 2-14 season is considered a winning record, as long as those two victories come against the Chicago Bears.

Well past the midway mark of the National Football League regular season, there are two clear favorites in each con-

ference to reach the Super Bowl.

The hated Chicago Bears actually led the league in scoring over the first few weeks of the season. Couple that with a killer defense and it's no wonder the latest edition of the "Monsters of the Midway" have a 9-1 record, best in the NFC.

Up until this year, Bear quarterback Rex Grossman remained an enigma – usually hurt and inactive during his first three years in the league, the former Florida Gator is proving that he can lead a team to victory. Of course, it helps that your defense gives up less than two scores a game. Even so, Grossman has made other defenses pay when they try to keep eight men in the box to shut down the Bears' running game. He's hit on some big passing plays by making the right reads on blitzes and using the play-action pass to perfection.

Over in the AFC, Peyton Manning may not throw 50 touchdown passes this year, yet he's been nearly flawless through ten games (at the time of this writing), tossing 20 TDs to only five interceptions as the Indianapolis Colts have matched the Bears with a 9-1 record of their own.

There was some concern in Indy in the off season that head coach Tony Dungy

### Trigger Pull

Master Sgt.  
Dave Larsen



might take a year off following the tragic loss of his oldest son, but in the wake of that tragedy and their collapse against the Steelers in the play-offs last season, the Colts appear to be a team on a mission – destined for greatness.

Both the Bears and the Colts possess better than average pass rushers, and have wreaked havoc on opposing signal callers through the first ten weeks.

With all that praise, you'd think the Bears and the Colts are my picks to meet in the year's title game, right?

Wrong!

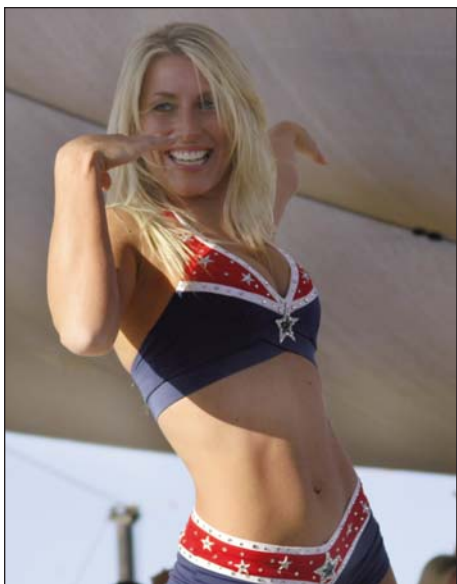
Every other year, or so it seems, the Bears put a talented team on the field which relies on its defense. While Grossman and crew are a vast improvement over previous years, remember this is the same team that choked at home in the play-offs last year. Seattle, even with a banged up Matt Hasselbeck and Shaun

Alexander, have a better shot at getting back to the Super Bowl than the Bears do. Both teams play in weak divisions, but with the San Francisco 49ers on the upswing now and the Rams always a difficult team to defend, it's obvious that the Bears are playing against the inferior competition.

Just like college teams who beat up on lesser opponents and then get spanked in a bowl against a 6-5 team from a major conference, Seattle will be better prepared for play-off football than Chicago. I expect the Bears to get a first-round bye, and then have a repeat of last year's swan dive at home.

The offense will sputter. Bear fans hearts will flutter. And no, I don't stutter: the Seahawks get back to the big game again. And lose. This will be Tony Dungy's year; a year for healing and a year for his players to finally rise to his level of excellence ... as a team. Known as a defensive guru for years, Dungy now rides herd on one of the most potent offenses ever seen, led by a shoo-in hall of fame quarterback. I'm rooting for the Colts, who thus far have only lost once – to the Dallas Cowboys. Come play-off time, they won't lose again.

If you've got something you want to share – in the column – drop us a line at david.j.larsen@mnd-b.army.mil. I've just got one final reason why the Bears won't win it all this year: Go Packers!



(Photo by Maj. Web Wright, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.)

**The New England Patriot Cheerleaders perform for Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Camp Striker, Iraq, Nov. 24. Local sports buff, Master Sgt. Dave Larsen does not think the Patriots will make it to the Super bowl this year.**